

*The Way
of the World*



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To
Conrad
in memory of
Katherine Von Der Lier
from
Martin Best.



"It is hard to enter the attic of the past and seek for fragments of sorrow to live for tomorrow."—*Page 4.*

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

BY

KATHERIN VON DER LIN



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD

WHEN the telephone was first exploited as a means of interlocation, prominent business men refused to invest capital in it, for they looked upon the invention as a toy.

In the matter of communication between this earth and discarnate minds, there is a diversity of opinion ranging from sheer negation to positive assurance.

That human personality survives bodily death is only another way of stating the doctrine, held even by ancient pagan philosophers, Plato among them, that the soul is immortal. The author of this volume abundantly witnesses that there are controls, or intelligences, that transmit messages through the medium, or automatist. The book is a narrative of personal experiences in which the phenomena of sensory and motor automatism and of clairvoyance are recounted by the writer, who is a noted automatist. The veracity of the highly dramatic incident in the New York court room and of what led up to it is attested by the generous publicity given the event in newspapers. But the truth of the numerous other happenings is not less incontrovertible because less known to the public.

To those interested in psychic research the author addresses herself, not in pages of theory and hearsay, but with concrete examples of the signal powers she exercises. The skeptic and the scoffer should bear in mind that many facts of physical nature, which to us have no element of novelty or surprise, our forefathers shrank from as manifestations of the black art, or as exceeding all possibility. A century hence what we now know only through a glass and darkly, will perhaps be as unmistakably clear as other disclosures in the arts, the sciences, and the life beyond, of which at present we have no inkling.

The poem, used as an introductory, was composed by the author's daughter, the "Ronile" of the narrative, who at the time was twelve years old. The thought in it is that of an observant and imaginative child with whose right to happiness domestic mischances played mischief, and she rapidly set down her thoughts in the ungarnished form they came to her.

LESLIE FRASER GORDON.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

For thus is the Way of the World,
On whose billows a soul is tossed ;
When smote by the whip of its will,
The hope in that soul is lost.
Yet, see! A light is sighted afar ;
And from it there comes a spark.
A signal! Beware, for the night is dark,
And pirate ships may be prowling about!
Black fears and horrors that soul doth taunt
While grappling with itself in doubt.
A blast—and, lo, a ship is seen!
Yet pirate craft it cannot be,
For a banner white from its flagstaff flows.
'Tis the good ship Salvation that cuts through the waves
To rescue the souls from their watery graves.
Some asleep from exhaustion, some struggling still,
Yet none of them seem to give up with will.
'Tis true they'll be saved, but it is not all done,
For the way of the world is not to succumb.

It is hard to enter the attic of the past and seek for
fragments of sorrow to live for tomorrow.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I

ON THE ROAD OF DESTINY

It was the Hudson-Fulton celebration which beckoned huge crowds to the metropolis of New York City, to watch the great parades both on land and water, and perceive how time with its progress changed from the sailing vessels to the mammoth steamers like palaces gliding through the waves. All trains were filled with crowds of enthusiastic people, chattering eagerly about the relative threads that weave back their ancestry to the Mayflower. If one could record their conversation it would link about half of the English-American population with the already overloaded Mayflower.

The train had passed a small station in New Jersey. Among the crowd who eagerly pressed their way to the already filled train was a woman leading a little girl by the hand. In the other hand she carried a small handbag. They did not fit in among the merrymakers as the deep, dark rings around their eyes gave proof of intense soul-suffering. The child pushed her golden curls from her face and watched the crowd with questioning glances, wondering why they all waved little American flags in gestures as they spoke. A look of admiration rested tenderly on the little symbols and a deep sigh was the salute from the sad heart of a little four-year-old citizen. Her eyes would hastily travel back to her mother as if in fear that she had failed to support her, as the mother tried hard to steady herself.

There was quite a contrast between those pleasure-seekers and the Woman, with white face and teeth set, and at times a convulsive twist at the cheek-bones, her eyes looking into empty space. Some of the travelers knew them, yet there was no response from the Woman to their kindly greetings. She held herself swaying as if in tune with her reverie.

A gentleman arose from his seat in the rear of the train and leaving his hat and flag in the seat to hold it, gently touched the Woman on the arm, then took the little "pet," as he called the little girl, in his arms and led them to the waiting seat. Another gentleman in the next seat gave up his place to make room for the child. Mr. Levir, for that was the gentleman's name, thanked him and sat down holding the child in his lap. He was the Woman's lawyer and he seemed highly pleased at this meeting, and although he tried to talk to her, she sat looking out of the window—too far, it seemed, for him to find words to call her back from her reverie. He talked to Ronile, his pal, as he called the little girl and tried hard to make her smile by waving the little flag across her face.

Then he turned abruptly to the woman and said somewhat impatiently: "Now, Mrs. Delien, there is no use in your losing your mind. He is not worth it. If you want me to be successful in winning your case, you must be cheerful. You will never beat him in this way; you will only beat yourself out of your health and Ronile."

He stopped, thinking it was not right to remind her of losing her child.

The Woman turned her head and looked him squarely in the eyes saying, "What do you mean?"

"Well," he kept on, "if you want to know, he is now bringing a case against you on the ground that you are incapable of bringing up Ronile, and is trying to get her away from you."

Deep wrinkles formed on the anxious mother's brow. Her baby was at stake, her main support to hold her on the raft of conditions.

"What can he prove?" she whispered between her teeth.

"Well," said the lawyer, laconically, "he charges that you have epileptic fits."

"Can't you prove it is not so?" she said quite impatiently. "My heart is weak and my nerves are unstrung, but I am able to bring up the child I bore and I will."

He smiled, little concerned about the deep sorrow ringing out with each word. With him it was like the

butcher with a prize steer. He gets it, kills it, the best parts are sold to the one who can pay the most. Thus the lawyer worried little how it hurt his client to have her past happiness severed to the best advantage to himself. He pulled Ronile close to him and whispered, "How would you like to go to your papa and play with your dogs and pony?"

Her blue eyes sparkled for a minute at the thought of her pets. She nodded her head eagerly and said, "I want my Major and Marshall (her two pet collies), but I don't want my papa; he hurt my ear." She showed him the mark on her ear.

Her father while in a drunken condition was holding the child in his arms and she in disgust at his breath tried to get away. He was not steady enough to hold her and let her slip down along his body. In doing so, the child's ear was caught on the sharp edge of a pencil sticking out of his top pocket, making a deep wound. With a sharp cry, the child ran to her mother, holding her hand over the bleeding ear. He thought the mother was trying to get the child away from him and staggering over, beat the Woman, throwing her against the wall. Her body still showed marks of brutality, her head many times bleeding like the baby's ear, and she resolved that rather than have that tender plant crippled by his abuse, it would be better for the child if she knew no father; that surely the world would be large enough for two tired souls to live in peace.

Thus she left, consulting the gentleman at her side to start legal proceedings. Mr. Levir was still young and married, with nothing but a hedge running around his house. He held Ronile close to him, wondering why God did not place her in the lap of his wife, knowing she would be spared the hard road that was before her tender little feet to tread. He turned suddenly to the Woman saying, "We will take Ronile if you will let us have her and raise her well."

There was a defiant flash in the eyes of the little one as she quickly released herself from his embrace and slipped over to her mother's lap, throwing her arms around her neck and kissing her tenderly.

"Now, Ronile," said the lawyer, "you are not angry at me, I hope."

"I want to stay with my mother," she said simply.

"If you come back I will give you the flag," he said, coaxingly.

She reached for the flag and stroked the silken fabric, the blue stars of hope, the white stripes of faith and the red stripes of charity, thus making a banner, a good enough symbol for the Island of Refuge, America.



I wonder if the fairies know what I am thinking about?—Page 43.



CHAPTER II

WHERE BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER

The train stopped; more people got on. The name of the city seemed to remind the lawyer of something he wished to tell his client regarding the case. He suddenly pulled up the woman and child and led them out before the train started to proceed. He led them down the steps, stood Ronile on the pavement and, wiping his brow, said, "I am going to take you to get evidence for your case, such evidence as you will need to win your case in this state."

They mounted a car which brought them to the factory site of the town, and stopped before a row of small frame buildings. The doors of the houses were open. He inquired for a person with a Slavic sounding name, and the woman addressed, with many gestures and broad smiles, pointed to the second house. Mr. Levir took Ronile by the hand and begged Mrs. Delien to follow. They mounted a staircase, its plain boards scrubbed white, coming to the door of the upper chamber which was also ajar.

In a room which looked like a kitchen and dining room together sat a young mother holding a flaxen-haired baby in her arms and humming a weird Slavic melody. At the sight of the gentleman and Ronile, the young mother stopped short, caught up her baby and with nervous fingers tried to button her waist, failing which she put the baby on the bare floor and looked aghast at her former mistress who stood bracing herself against the wall, her hand gripping her heart. The lawyer was the first to speak. He asked the young mother who the child's father was.

She answered in a stammering, husky voice, "George Mikosh."

"What," he thundered, "you know better!"

She turned her face, looking down in shame.

Then the lawyer asked her, "Where is Mr. Mikosh?"

She replied with a frightened glance at her former mistress that he was at the mill.

Seeing this the lawyer said, "Were you not in this lady's employ one year ago, and did she not discharge you for this?" pointing to the child. "Your husband has been in this country only eleven months; how can you prove what you have just told me?"

Then he took Ronile and placed her beside the baby and pointed out the resemblance, which was most remarkable.

The Woman looked reproachfully at her former housemaid, then at the children and with a voice choking with sorrow said, "Oh, Eva, why have you done this?"

A red flush crossed the pretty peasant face of the young mother, and jerking her head pettishly she said, "He," meaning her former employer, "said you would soon die and I would be the mistress."

Mrs. Delien closed her eyes to overcome her grief. To think what had cut the threads of happiness; set her afloat in the billows of conditions! Then she clenched her fists and said in bitter, anguished tones: "So you speculated upon my death to create another life, and you never considered the young, tender life of my child who never harmed a hair of your head! You broke up our home, our very life."

She choked, overcome, for Ronile was kneeling before the baby petting it and trying to wipe away the mother's milk which still hung on its mouth.

"Yes," thought the stricken mother, "their instinct tells them; then how dare I condemn the fruit of sin?" But bitterness seemed to rise in full power, knocking at the door of recompense, demanding balm for a breaking heart. She looked back at Eva, thinking, "Oh, how could she speculate on my death, when I had a child to care for?" She told Eva she would have to appear in court and testify and that she would have to bring the child with her.

The young mother fell on her knees, wailing in torn bits of language, moving her head from the floor up to her former mistress, wringing her hands in despair, and crying out, "He leave me; he leave me."

The baby seeing her mother's distress looked first at the tall man with the heavy-rimmed, tortoise-shelled

glasses, then at Ronile's mother with such a look of reproach on her baby face that Ronile in confusion tried to console the infant and picked her up and carried her to her mother. Mrs. Delien clasped the poor innocent baby in her arms feeling the sobs and heart beats on her own breast.

Suddenly a shrill whistle blew and Eva jumped up, running to the stove, forgetting everything but the duty of wife and mother.

The Woman fought with her inclination to show mercy, as she clasped the weapon in flesh to her bosom. Should she fight for her freedom? Slowly she set the child on the floor again and said, "Eva, our home is gone, and our trunk is on the train without a destination. I hope you can keep a shelter for your baby." Slowly she glanced around what meant a kingdom to a homeless mother and child. There was a small path leading to the mill and hundreds of men walked vigorously toward their firesides. The woman paused, too weak to go on. She heard the foster father of that happy baby calling, "Eva! Baby!" Eva stood at the window, holding the baby and smiling back at him, forgetting her tears and past sin.

Then Mister Levir became very irate, charging the unhappy woman with silly sentiment, telling her she had taken out of his hands the finest evidence he had ever procured, and all on account of a weeping servant, and snapping out other words of resentment at her actions, left her swaying on a broken ladder, only a step higher.

CHAPTER III

THE CLAIM OF YOUTH

Mrs. Delien took Ronile by the hand and walked slowly toward the nearest railroad station to wait for the next train to Manhattan. The shades of night were already falling and they were soon walking on the deck of the ferry-boat, both absorbed in thought. Ronile at times looked sadly through the shining road of silvery substance the moon seemed to have paved on the water. Her mother leaned on the railing of the ferry-boat, clasping her hands in ardent prayer. Suddenly she seized the child and told her she was so tired and wanted to sleep in the cooling water. "God will take us if we go down into the water," she said.

The child moved away in horror, shaking her head and reminding her mother of the stories she had told her of her little brother, who was now an angel, her Guardian Angel.

"He will see and help us, mother dear, without our going into the black water, for that is too black to sleep in. Why, mother dear," she kept on pleading, "Mike killed the kitties in the water, and I don't want to die. I don't, mama dear."

The moon by that time was coming full over the high towers of lower Manhattan. A distant strain of music came floating over the North River, the stars becoming less visible as the lights of the city began to penetrate the darkness. Yet the eager eyes that were the windows of the soul, so young and yet so strong, that soul must hold salvation for another. Those eyes roamed over the sky in search of a hold to connect a drifting life.

Suddenly she clasped her hands and showed her mother the two little stars blinking peacefully in the sky. "See, mother dear, they are the eyes of my little brother and they will see us, the Angel eyes."

Slowly the Woman gazed up in the direction which the child was pointing, and as she gazed long and earnestly,

slowly a form emerged; a face was visible; the eyes became those of a child of infinite beauty; then two arms appeared through the form of a woman holding the child, a woman who, too, had suffered from mankind. This great Mother of Mercy looked at Ronile, then at the Woman; then the child with glowing tenderness in its saintly eyes once more gazed at the water, then at the Woman and disappeared. It was a sacred moment of blessing which with gentle grace had put a new rung in the ladder of a wrecked life to lead it on the road of sacrifice to great exaltation.

After they left the boat the Woman stood wondering where to go. She well remembered the words of her lawyer: "He is having you watched and is trying to get evidence against you by false charges. Don't stop at hotels if you can help it." She had friends to whom she could go but the parade had beckoned them out. The hotels were crowded as the city was filled with visitors and a room was not to be had. They sat in the lobby of the Waldorf-Astoria until the parade had gone by and crowds dispersed.

The smell of food reached them and timidly the child said, "Mother dear, I am so hungry," bringing the mother to the realization that they had had nothing to eat all day. She took Ronile into the dining room and ordered broth. She had but little money, so she tided the child's desire for some goodies over to a more prosperous time, telling her of their need of money for shelter.

Ronile listened intently to the music and told her mother that some day she would like to play a harp. She loved that best, she thought. The mother paid little attention to the child's chatter, her thoughts wandering back to Eva whose baby was by that time tucked in bed with perhaps its father rocking it to sleep. He looked so happy—that clean Slavic peasant boy. She thought perhaps it might have been her duty to hold out for the sake of Ronile, but where was the father's duty toward his child? Where the respect? Not all men are like George Mikosh. Perhaps there were more like that baby, and a shiver ran through her tired body. Come what may, there might be hunger in this turn of the road, but not abuse.

They walked slowly up town through the crowds and

after what seemed to the tired child a long distance, they rang the bell of a fairly good-looking apartment house. Just then the Waters came home from the parade and Ronile clung to her Uncle Albert and Auntie Inez, as she called these friends.

"Did Daddy come, too?" was their first question.

"No, we are getting a divorce, mother and I," said Ronile, "and we will never see him again."

"Well, well," said Albert Waters, laughingly. "So you are getting a divorce, Ronile; how do you make that out?"

"Oh," said the child, "the lawyer said we will surely win."

Mr. and Mrs. Waters were old friends of the Deliens and knew of the brutality Mrs. Delien had to contend with, but they did not think it would ever come to a break on account of the child. They both looked in alarm at Mrs. Delien. Her face told the tale.

"Are you not well?" asked Albert's mother, who was then getting ready to go home.

"I would feel better if I knew where to lay my head," came the answer. "My tongue is parched and dry and my hands and feet are numb."

"Well," said the old mother, "come with me, and you, Inez, keep Ronile so that Mrs. Delien will have complete rest."

"That's fine!" said Albert. "Now we have you with us at last and you will let your mother take a good rest."

They made Ronile a bed on the couch, tucking her in snugly and trying hard to make her forget the hardships of the day. In her bedtime prayer Ronile thanked the Lord because He had sent the Little Saviour and His Blessed Mother to stop her mother from going into the water to sleep.

"Did your mother want to do that?" they asked in alarm of the praying child.

"Yes," she replied, "but I prayed for my little angel brother to help us, and he did." She then turned her head and fell asleep with a thankful look on her face that she was not sleeping in the cold, black water.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH A VALLEY OF DARKNESS

The kind old lady had a small apartment in the Bronx which she tried to make comfortable for the tired visitor by giving up her own bed. It was past midnight when they retired and just as the hostess dropped into slumber, a sound like someone choking startled her, and hearing the same sound again she ran into her guest's room and found the woman in convulsions. Fortunately there was some hot water ready, Mrs. Delien having refused tea before retiring, complaining of the numbness of her tongue, and the water was still hot in the kettle. The old lady hurriedly mixed mustard with the hot water and placed the woman's feet in it, wiping the froth from her mouth and praying that God would help her. Soon the twitching ceased and the form of the woman lay motionless in a state of coma.

"No wonder," said the old friend, Mrs. Waters, "just like a storm; the after effects of a fight." She sat all night by the bedside, thanking God that her son was a good man and did not drink.

"Oh, dear," she thought as she stroked the Woman's hand, "if her husband could see her now, perhaps it would cure him." Then she thought how brutal he was when they visited them occasionally; how the Woman had no money of her own; how she had to keep an account of every cent and if she did not, how he would beat her. "Well," she mumbled, "she will always have that much even if she doesn't have a box at the theater and servants and a poor hungry heart."

There were still black and blue marks on the Woman's body. With motherly care she pulled the covers closer to protect that body, still shivering at intervals, like the after-effects of a subsiding storm.

The day was dawning; a red ring began to line along the horizon, like a bloody band that ties up a wound. The elderly woman compared that signal with this body,—a new day, a new hope, the tears of yesterday. She sat a

long time with folded hands, slumbering, thus gaining the strength necessary to meet the burdens of each day.

The days grew into weeks and still Mrs. Delien's condition seemed to linger between coma and apathy. She scarcely ever opened her eyes, and the poor old lady wondered why she never asked for her child; why she did not care whether it was morning, noon or night. One day she resolved to have her daughter-in-law bring Ronile. They had dressed her in a new blue-and-white dimity dress with a black ribbon drawn through at the waistline, neck and sleeves. The optimism in a child is a wonderful thing; she did not realize how her mother had battled with life and death. All she knew was the happiness of possessing a new dress, new friends who loved her and made her forget. Would that we could take from children that keen optimism of today; forget yesterday and trust in tomorrow—to the great law of good to come. Faith in fate is the foundation of the swaying soul.

"Mother dear, are you not getting up?" Each word was a bracing breath which teemed with new life and sent new life through the drained veins. A warning of Right over Might to hold out on what is and must be, and not let it slip through our fingers.

They were discussing Ronile's danger, thinking the patient was still in coma; of how the child's father was trying to get her; how he wanted to prove that the mother was unable to keep her and that he had more right than strangers. They heard a noise in the bedroom and a moment later a figure thin and white, like one risen from the grave, stood on the threshold, only the fire in her eyes speaking of the strength and determination that she was ready to fight like a tigress for her own. Alas! The body was too weak to stand the strain long and she swooned away and was again placed in the bed.

They decided that it was better to leave Ronile with her mother as she seemed to have a reviving effect upon her. The tender little hands slowly pushed back the dark clouds of unconsciousness and brought her mother back to strive along the road of self-support.

CHAPTER V

"JUST YOU AND I, MOTHER"

A week later a small apartment was vacated which Mrs. Delien rented, the friends helping her to get some second-hand furniture, and soon a nest was built for mother and child, and how happy they felt in their little home, with peace as their daily guest! However, there was another visitor, a grim one, whose name was "NEED." He must be fought until the Woman was strong enough to work. She wrote her lawyer and asked him to try and procure an allowance for her, but there came back protests from the child's father, charging that his wife in leaving him had made him ill; that he was suffering from lumbago and that his business was not paying him enough to support himself properly and that his brother was supplying means for his daily needs. He tried hard to show the vice-consul how he suffered by using a cane to hobble to the witness stand.

The lawyer for the Woman asked him who was paying the salary of the maid he employed to keep house, and he answered that she was his nurse and that his brother paid her salary.

There was a look of disgust on the face of the wife and she realized that henceforth she must fight alone and struggle for the child God had given them and that it would be useless to try further to obtain anything in the way of help from her husband. She rose to her full height and in a weak, trembling voice, said: "I would not take a penny from this man. I never want to see his face again, not even to be freed from him."

The husband well knew the meaning of those words; he knew from past experience that she never spoke empty phrases and respected her for that, and felt if she got away from him now his last chance was gone. He thought lack of means would bring her back to him, but now he saw that she was prouder than before. Her pride and self-respect lashed him like a blade of steel; it robbed him of his

reason to hold out against her and play the part he had intended to bring her back.

With fleetness of foot, the wife left the court room, the husband after her in a swift gallop, mounting the stairs and leaving the cane and lumbago behind him, much to the amusement and amazement of the court. The newspapers gave a lengthy account of how the husband forgot his lumbago when he was trying to catch hold of his wife. He overtook her by jumping onto a fast-moving street car, but the wife begged the conductor to protect her from his annoyance.

For a long time, the words ran through her mind that she was his wife but that she was glad to brave the unknown road of the future alone. That night she told Ronile that they did not have to worry any more about black and blue marks on their bodies.

"God will help us," said Ronile, as she clasped her hands for her bedtime prayer, "and, mother dear, just think we are alone and so happy; just you and I, mother."

Mr. Waters told her about a position at the Manhattan Beach Hotel assuring her that the work would be light and that the ocean air would help her regain her strength.

"Inez and mother will spend the summer at Sheephead Bay, so you can see Ronile each day and they will have the pleasure of taking care of that little pet of ours."

"How kind you are, my dear friends," said Mrs. Delien, one day as they were walking on the beach. "It makes me feel so happy when I lie in my bed at night up in that tower, with nothing but the stars above and the roaring of the ocean below. I feel so happy, so secure, so near to God."

"Well," said the old lady, "it was the turning point in the road for you and He tested you, the Great Father in heaven. If you cling to Him now, you will never need to worry any more. He will brighten the way for you, my dear. I, too, brought up Albert alone, but his father was in heaven and God let him help me rear my boy and he is a good man today." She looked out toward the ocean and saw Ronile sitting on Albert's shoulder, clapping her hands

in glee. "He loves children, and why God doesn't send him a child, I cannot understand, but He knows best."

That night the Woman thought of those words: "He will brighten the way for you, if you trust in Him." She stood by the tower window and reached out her arms trying to mark decided lines on God's registry, lines of worship and gratitude. In the evenings she would sit in the park and listen to the music or the roaring of the ocean like a subsiding sound of past troubles. There was a gentleman who often sat near her accustomed retreat, of whom she took little notice at first, but she often wondered if he was not paid by her husband to watch her, but as she had decided to run her life on a single track, she had nothing to fear from him.

Summer was nearing its close and with it the secure feeling of having meals served and getting a regular salary. She tried other employment but always feared for the safety of her child. One day as she was making Ronile a woolen cap an idea came to her. She purchased some yarn and made samples, crocheting day and night, but she had her baby by her side and they were happy.

They had made a new friend at the beach. "Just call me Josie," she said when they asked for her name, and Josie proved to be sunshine in their lonely lives. She would come with theater tickets or a toy for Ronile, always helped the Woman finish her orders, or took Ronile for a walk. Sometimes she brought her pet Pomeranian dog for Ronile to play with.

One day she became alarmed and said that a gentleman was asking the janitor if a little girl by the name of Ronile was living at the house; that the janitor had asked her if this was the little girl the gentleman was looking for, and Josie had said, "No, this little girl's name is Albertina."

"That was very witty of you, my dear," said Mrs. Delien, with trembling lips, and then called on the janitor to get a description of the gentleman who had made inquiries about the little girl. The Woman knew from the description that the gentleman was Ronile's father, and when she came back she said: "We must get away; I

cannot rest since he knows where we are. I would like to go West, but where?"

"That's not hard," replied Josie. "Go where they all go! Reno, where you get the best salve to patch up broken hearts." Josie said she would like to go West, too, but that her work kept her there for awhile, and while she regretted losing her friends, she felt it was best for them to go.

CHAPTER VI

RENO, THE CITY OF HEART BALM

Two years have passed. The Woman and child were once more on the train, but there is a brighter look in their eyes, a look of hope. There where the golden sun is setting, there must be rest. It was 3 A. M. when the train halted to let them off. There they stood chilled to the bone. It seemed that the black barren hills were caving in on them as she pulled the crying, sleepy child up in her arms and mounted the bus that brought them to the River Hotel. The Woman engaged an inside room because the price suited her means, put the child to bed and then sat down to think and wonder what she would do.

"Oh, my baby," she thought, "it is well for you that you do not feel the pain that presses my heart and throat at this hour." She took her purse and counted out her earthly goods—thirty-eight dollars. Her energy grew as her capital dwindled, and she immediately began making inquiries as to the prospects for securing employment. The clerk directed her to the newspaper office, where they often had inquiries for help.

After breakfast they went to the newspaper office and received the address of a Mrs. Wilton on Maple Avenue, who was in need of a housekeeper. They walked along filled with great hopes. It was in May and everything was in blossom and how happy they felt as they passed along to their destination! Mrs. Wilton was very nice and would gladly have considered giving the Woman the position but as she had three children of her own, she felt that a fourth would make too much confusion, and therefore felt that she could not take her. The Woman looked at the lady in amazement as she had never felt that Ronile would be in anyone's way, but felt rather that where the child was, there were blessings and sunshine. Turning to go, her eyes rested on the picture of a little boy, with a pine branch draped around it, and a light seemed to flit around the face in the picture.

Mrs. Wilton watched the strange look in the Woman's face and asked, "Does that picture attract you?"

"Yes," said the Woman, "he is an angel; I saw his light."

"Oh, my," said Mrs. Wilton, with tears in her eyes, "he was an angel in life; too good to live. I suppose that is why God took him away from me."

Mrs. Delien gazed back at the picture and more to herself and the picture, said: "I, too, have given God my first-born, my little boy. Just five days God left him with me, then took him, to make me a more patient and a better woman." Then she turned around, looked defiantly at Mrs. Wilton, and said, "If fate threw you on your own resources, which one of your children would you give up?"

Mrs. Wilton looked up at the picture with tears in her eyes, saying, "God only knows, we can hardly live without that boy; my health is broken since he went."

"Well," said the Woman, "we are both represented by God; we gave Him back the angels He placed in our arms; we answer His call at all times in giving up what He desires. We always act and judge from a selfish standpoint; not the way we are but the way our scale of justice holds out. Selfishness is a cloak which holds back the little sprouts that spring from our body of existence. We keep in close touch with ourselves only and shut down the shades of selfishness that keep the glorious light of the sun of God that shines through others and most of all when they are in sorrow. 'Give and thou shalt receive, for whatsoever you have done to those in My name, that you have done unto Me.'"

With these words as if in prayer, the Woman and child moved slowly away from the house, leaving the lady to her thoughts. They answered several other inquiries, but all objected to employing a woman with a child. The Woman had no more strength that morning. In the afternoon they again ventured out.

On Virginia Bridge they met a tribe of Indians—the squaws with papooses strapped to their backs, and the unusual sight held their attention for some time, Ronile wishing to own one of the dear, chubby Indian babies, and ad-

miring these healthy primitive children of God and Mother Nature who holds them all to her bosom. But, alas! Then came civilization which co-operates with the haughty Mrs. Etiquette. She harbors but a few, giving them too much luxury and serving the body only, forgetting the dial that moves the compass on the ship of life into the harbor of salvation. Rich food and drink cripple the mind, making the eyes, which are the windows of the soul, grow dim, the tongue heavy. Only in sorrow doth the soul grow. As these words ran through the mind of the outcast Woman, she smiled cynically and she wished that she could join those nature-loving people, who smiled encouragingly at Ronile with a smile which seemed to say that with them there would be room for all; but with these people there is a boundary line, which civilization has created in her generosity for their education. These mothers have broad, radiant smiles, showing their even white teeth, their shiny braids of black hair glistening in the sunlight. They seemed so sincere and one felt that they were far from the valley of degeneration.

As they entered the hotel, Mr. Gordon, the proprietor, spoke to Ronile. "Well," he said, addressing both, "have you seen the town? It is very healthful here among the mountains." Mrs. Delien introduced herself and said, smiling sadly, that they had covered most of the streets in looking for employment.

"You must work?" he asked, and seemed quite astonished, remarking that she did not look like the working type. Then he walked over to an elderly gentleman with white hair and mustache, saying, "Judge, I want you to meet a lady over here," leading the judge over to Mrs. Delien. Mr. Gordon then informed the judge of the necessity for the Woman to obtain employment to support herself and her child; that she had come to the city to stay if it were possible to obtain the right kind of employment, where she could keep her child with her.

The judge thought for a moment, then went to the telephone and called up his wife, knowing that she was in need of a housekeeper, and after hanging up the telephone, took out his card and wrote on it the address of one of the

prominent families of Reno, telling the Woman to apply the next morning.

The grateful look in her eyes seemed to appeal to the Judge, and after the Woman and child had gone to their room, he said to Mr. Gordon: "She is not the regular type of fish the tide brings in. We must help the little woman," and mumbled as he threw the ashes of his cigar away, "I don't blame her for not wanting to give up that little girl; wouldn't mind having her myself."

A little later we find the two outcasts snug in bed with an expression of hope on their tired faces.

They were the first to enter the dining room the next morning, and at nine o'clock we find them ringing the bell at one of Reno's finest residences. On the left stood Mount Rose, still snow-covered, Moana in the distance, to the right Truckee River rushing in torrents through the town.

"Oh, mother dear, I would love to live here. Just see the robin, he is not afraid of me, he wants me to stay here," and they thought they had at last found a place where they could live and work.

The lady herself answered the door, which seemed to the Woman a good sign, as there would be no butler to object to the "brat" as she had heard one remark. The Woman handed her the card the Judge had given her the day before, and sizing them up with a scrutinizing glance, her eyes rested on the child and biting her lips the lady slowly shook her head and said that although she needed a housekeeper, she could not take the Woman on account of the —

"Stop," cried the tortured mother. "Don't say that, for God's sake." She knew that she must work and they had already wandered over the town, and she felt that this was her last chance. The lady said she was expecting a Chinaman from San Francisco, but the Woman offered to do the work of two if she would give her the position and let her keep her little girl with her, so the child could have the extra bed.

The lady smiled cynically, saying: "Your hands don't look as though you had done much housework; how can you expect to do the work of two servants? This is a large



"For thus is the Way of the World, on whose billows a soul is tossed."
—Page 4.

house and when our daughter comes back we will entertain and need at least two servants."

Well," said the Woman, "I have my mind made up to work; we must live and will not beg. I need my child's companionship to keep me up."

"Yes," said the lady, "all you divorcees do is to come here and take our husbands and sons. I would rather have a Chinaman."

"But," said the Woman, "if a woman looks for honest work, agreeing to do the work of two people just to keep her baby with her, she does not come for anybody's husband; she can get them without working," and with a heavy heart she dragged herself away, glancing occasionally toward the river, her lips set with a determination to do or die.

CHAPTER VII

AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

The waitress who served them their lunch at the hotel told the proprietor that the lady with the little girl seemed to be sick; that she did not touch a bite of food, and she feared that she was becoming very ill. Mr. Gordon walked over to her and found her looking far beyond her food; that she was not conscious of anything around her. He talked to Ronile and told her to bring her mother to Mrs. Gordon's apartment after lunch. Mrs. Gordon was not well but seemed anxious to do good and they decided to make the Woman the head waitress.

Once more the light of gratitude shone in the Woman's eyes, but her good fortune was of short duration, as shortly after she had started her work as head waitress, one of the divorce-candidates, a good-natured, half-the-time intoxicated gentleman became more than pleasant and slipped a note into her hand as he left the dining room.

If a viper had stung her the effect could not have been more disgusting. "A date," he demanded. She crushed the paper in the palm of her hand and threw it into the waste-basket. This gave her a view of the side porch where the man sat with Ronile on his lap, kissing her continually, and she noticed that a glass filled with liquor stood on the table near him. How it brought back the trouble and suffering she had gone through, and now to see her baby being fondled by this evil-minded man, and she not able to take her away from him, for she was on duty. She thought perhaps this man had been paid by her husband to get evidence against her, and that a public position such as she occupied in the hotel was not to her benefit until she was free. She feared that he might steal Ronile, for indeed after six months she found out that he had tried to do so.

The Woman then told Mr. Gordon that she felt she would have to give up the position, and also told him about the note.

He replied, "That is why the position of head waitress

is often open," but that he was unable to control the morals of his guests.

The Woman took the child by the hand and they walked toward the river bank and sat down. Ronile was looking for four-leaf clovers, the mother for a way out of her misery. She pictured that if he stole the child she was without means to follow him, and thought what the child's future would be with a lawless father; and as she seemed to have failed TO DO, it was better to die; that the child would be in God's care, and she would pay the penalty with her soul, and if Hell was worse than the misery she had suffered, she would take the consequences. "It is Ronile's happiness, and oh, dear Lord, that gave her to me, I will return her to you. Perhaps she is misplaced here, but I love her so that I want to spare her my fate, a soul tossed on the billows of conditions."

Ronile had found a four-leaf clover and joyously she ran to her mother. "Look, mama dear, I know we will have good luck," and turning she saw a massive building, where only yesterday she had cried out: "The robin wants me here, but not mankind. The image of God through which the Father intends to manifest, for He too was born of woman when He came as Son of God—Man, guided by the Holy Spirit to prove Faith, Hope and Charity; what was His reward?—crucifixion. Still He forgave them, saying, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do.'"

With those words on her lips she moved farther up the river bank. "God forgave them," she murmured, and her eyes rested on a bridge near Washington Street. There she wanted to give up their miserable bodies, for the waves to play into fragments rather than that man should tear their souls as well.

She seemed entranced—a body moving on to end a struggle, yet the child full of life was unaware of the mother's intention to seek rest for their weary bodies.

"There is no rest," she thought, "for will we not be tossed by the waves into an ugly mass? Yet, the soul loses hold of its house; it tries to get away for it has missed in fate the faith. Oh, thou God, art Thou not nearest when

need is greatest?" Indeed, for through unseen powers the childish frame moved away from the mother's cold grasp.

They came to a church, one stained-glass window showing a picture of the Good Shepherd holding a lamb in His arms. The child hastily climbed the steps and stood transfixed, then walked up the aisle of the empty church. The smell of incense still rested soothingly on the atmosphere. It was Decoration Day and the cemetery was filled with people decorating the graves of their loved ones. The mother followed the child into the church. By that time she was standing before the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

Suddenly, she heard the voice of her child raised imploringly to the dear Mother of the Saviour, as she held up the four-leaf clover: "Please, I give you this, if you will help us get work; nobody wants my mother because she has me. You will understand. You had to hide your Baby from Herod when he wanted to kill Him, but see," as she stretched her little arms upward, "you had a daddy and a donkey, and we have nobody." Tears were rolling over the face of the child; the clover leaf trembled in her hand. Then the mother for the first time looked up at the Statue, and behold, "a little child shall lead them."

The statue seemed to take life; the Babe in her arms took the clover and laid its hand on the child's head, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." They moved toward the Woman and touched her brow, and a cold quiver ran over her form. The Blessed Virgin held the chin up, compelling the eyes to look into hers, thus establishing a union, compelling reason to return and transmitting the current between heaven and earth, pouring God's breath into a hungry soul. The look was radiant, it seemed that a magic spell had loosened the iron ring that held the Woman's heart and soul asunder, and soon hot tears were flowing down on the clasped hands, as if to wash away the stain left by the thought of self-destruction.

Once more, hope through faith was awakened in a swaying soul, as they moved slowly out of the church and on toward the hotel.

It was late when they arrived and some of the guests

at the hotel were leaving the dining room after the evening meal. Mr. Gordon walked rapidly toward them saying that Mrs. Neil had called up and wanted to see her at once.

Mrs. Neil had been to the cemetery decorating the grave of her child, when a voice seemed to say to her: "Oh, mother, why do you pay tribute to bones when you refused shelter to a living child? We are all serving at His altar and our duty is to watch over our loved ones, leading them toward the Father by doing good deeds for one another. I am very sad, for the lilies you gave me are filled with tears from a homeless child; they cannot serve the altar of God with tears of sorrow in them."

Mrs. Neil, who had refused shelter and work to the Woman, went home at once and tried to reach them, always seeing before her the "lilies filled with tears." On the second visit of the Woman and her child, Mrs. Neil, moved by the voice she heard in the cemetery, agreed to employ the Woman and allow her to keep the child with her, giving her permission to play in the smoking den at certain times of the day, and so it came about that instead of allowing despair to conquer over faith, she had at last found food and shelter for herself and child when fate led her to the little church near the river.

Mrs. Neil was right when she said there was work for two, but the Woman was determined to hold out. The robin held greater charm and the clover leaves had more attraction for the child than the smoking den.

One day Senator Nixon passed in his car and took the little girl for a ride. On their return the lady for the first time took the little one and held her hand as she waved good-by to the Senator. After that Ronile was the chief attraction in the family, but the mother had more will power than strength and soon we find her ill and unable to do the work required of her. The Woman had never made any bargain as to salary, and after two weeks' time asked Mrs. Neil if she was satisfied with her work, and on learning that she was, ventured to ask her about her salary, and was told that she would pay her thirty-five dollars a month.

"But," said the Woman, "Judge Jarvis said you would pay forty dollars a month, and I am doing the work of two!" Then the lady told her that she was making the salary less on account of the child's board. The Woman offered to buy the milk which her child needed, but the lady told her she could get a Chinaman if she wanted to pay forty dollars.

"Oh, Mrs. Neil," she said, "how can you compare me with a Chinaman," and resolved to leave at the first opportunity.

The following Sunday evening after dinner had been served, although she was very tired, the Woman felt that she must consult at least a druggist to relieve a queer sensation around her heart and severe pain when she took a full breath. Sometimes, too, her teeth became set and she was so weak she could scarcely do the work she was called upon to do. One of her tasks was to carry up scuttles of coal to keep a fire in the kitchen stove on account of the hot water. Poor little Ronile tried her best to help her, but the scuttle was too big for her and she took newspapers and wrapped them around the pieces of coal and carried them up one by one, sometimes looking as black as the coal itself.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE FOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR

In the drug store they met a sweet old lady from West Virginia, who was giving a little dinner at the Thomas Cafe, and begged them to join her. The Woman told her they had been to dinner, but she insisted, and as they entered one of the guests became alarmed because there would be thirteen at table, but the Woman assured them that they would not partake. Some of the readers may well remember the little dinner party given by the dear old lady, Mrs. Kaufman, who died shortly afterward of heart disease.

The Woman was introduced to a little "Butterfly Lady" who had just joined the "Colony of Broken Hearts," although many of the members of the colony did not suffer greatly from broken hearts. The chief pastimes of the divorce candidates were horseback riding and parties where the drink flowed freely. Mrs. Devitt was the Butterfly Lady, and she expressed a desire to leave the hotel and take a house, so it was arranged with the help of Mrs. Kaufman that the Woman and her little girl should take charge of Mrs. Devitt's house, at a salary of forty dollars a month. This appealed to the Woman for she felt she could not stand much longer to hold out under the work she was doing in her present place with Mrs. Neil. When she told Mrs. Neil that she was going to leave, Mrs. Neil was very indignant to think the Woman would leave her to work for Mrs. Devitt, reminding her of the loose characters of the divorcees.

Mrs. Devitt rented a ten-room house for forty dollars; her horse cost her forty dollars a month, and the Woman's wages were forty dollars. The Mistress, as she called herself, had in all two hundred dollars a month income, so there was eighty dollars left for food and the expenses of the little butterfly. It was a change for the better in a way. The work was not to be so hard for the Woman, as the little lady was out a great deal for she was getting quite popular, although she often held parties at her home. The

Woman's room was far enough away from the scene of the parties not to interfere with her rest, but often in the morning on coming into the front of the house she would find the pictures turned, the piano on the porch and turmoil throughout. Sometimes the guests could not go home and in the morning she would have to prepare breakfast for all with a disgust that was beyond description.

One morning she came down and found the very gentleman who had slipped her the note mixing an absinthe frappe in the pantry. The smell of the liquor robbed her of all sense of obedience as a servant. She picked up the glass and threw it on the floor with a defiant look at the man; then cried out, "If it were not for drink I would not be here." The man looked at her in amazement and left the room calling himself a fool.

After the lady got up, the Woman spoke to her of her youth and the danger of her associating with people like that man, who did not care for her; that after he had picked the flower he would throw it aside discarded and class her with a field of daisies swaying in the breeze; then when all the petals of sweetness were gone, the stem would be thrown by the wayside for the passer-by to tread upon. No one would care for the broken flower, but all would go into the field and pick while they lasted. Once the flower was broken it would be shunned by every one.

Then remorse entered, and a pitiful story ran from those young sensuous lips. She had married, at fifteen, a young schoolmate who was unable to support her, and she went to New York seeking employment on the stage. One of the managers took an interest in her and she told him she had been married. He sent for the young husband, but the child-wife was not willing to live in the way he was able to support her. She told him he could not buy her pretty gowns and jewels, and she would not live with him. The boy told her he was too proud to beg but would work his way up, and showed her his worn-out shoes and clothes and that he could not buy new ones. She begged the rich friend to give him work. Instead the man put temptation in the boy's way and he fell, trying to get money to support his wife in the way she wanted to live.

The man had him watched and secured evidence against him, which resulted in five years' imprisonment for theft. This, however, was not grounds for divorce, so the rich friend sent the young wife west with the allowance referred to of two hundred dollars a month.

In horror the Woman listened to the story told by the young wife who did not seem to be the least concerned about the life she was leading, and gave no thought apparently to her girlhood sweetheart who suffered in prison, with love for her still burning in his heart, counting each day with new hope, as the time drew nearer when he would be with her. She took out some of his letters which she said were the only love letters she had ever received; that her rich friend would not write her love letters fearing that he might be sued for breach of promise.

The Woman sat awhile lost in thought and searching prisons in her mind to find some way to release a victim of circumstances. She said to the little lady: "So, at eighteen you are through with love letters when they should only be beginning. Law is law, my dear, and we must abide by it, or pay the penalty with remorse. These men will boast of dragging you through the mire, and make love to you, but when they want to build a nest for the ONE woman they will seek out a good girl to be the mother of their children. In after years, when in company with his wife, he would not recognize you, and if you should happen to meet them together, and he spoke to you, he would refrain from introducing you to his wife. If she made any inquiry as to who you are he would evade the question and would tell her he would not want her to speak to you; that you are a disreputable character with whom he would not allow her to associate and that your husband was in prison." And so the Woman opened a new book of life to a crushed flower who was indeed lying on the floor sobbing out her bitterness at the sacrifice of her youth and purity.

The Woman told her she was seeking freedom, not because there was anyone waiting for her, but just to be free to hold Ronile alone and to be free from subjection.

The blowing of a horn was heard and on going to the

door the Woman beheld a crowd calling for the young Mistress to come along; that there was a newcomer in the party, a lean, sporty, English-appearing man of about thirty. The little lady was soon ready to join them, running out to meet them, the Woman looking after, shaking her head. Forgotten were the love letters, husband, advice and warnings. Like a butterfly she flitted on and would until her wings were broken.

From that time on she was ever in the company of the newcomer, who took her on long trips alone, much to the chagrin of her other associates, who in malice and revenge wrote to her New York friend, resulting in his stopping her allowance.

Mr. Rimpel, the Englishman, did not make any promises to her as he was only waiting to be free so that he could re-marry. He introduced her to a wealthy man of San Francisco, who liked her very much but did not trust "a daisy in a big field," so to find her out he sent her a private maid, who stayed with her two weeks, and left with enough information to satisfy the man's suspicions and he did not call on the young Butterfly Lady again.

Being without an income she went back east thinking she could become reconciled with her former friend, so we find the Woman again out of employment, but glad to be out of the glamour of it all.

The Woman had saved a little money and took a small apartment, consisting of living room with wall-bed, a kitchenette and bath. It was an inside room, but peace was reigning and a chance to pray. She had no further thought of suicide—a power seemed to hold her in patience and faith. She put Ronile in school and took a position as demonstrator at twenty dollars a week, which lasted for two weeks.

Soon after Percy Rimpel called her up and asked her if she would cater for a party he was giving consisting of a cold lunch and punch. There was not enough liquor to make punch for the crowd, and when she told the host this he told her that they would soon get drunk and then they would not need any more. She followed his instructions, and thinking to make more punch she made a pot of tea

and added it to the punch, much to the disgust of the host, as it kept them all sober. He reproached her and she became so disgusted that thereafter she resolved not to accept further employment of the kind, believing it would be better to economize on what money she could earn in other ways.

She lengthened Ronile's dresses, and as she sewed the idea came to her of making fancy caps of silk and lace and was well paid for her time spent in this way.

CHAPTER IX

THE MIRACLE

One night as she was working in the kitchen on the caps of silk and lace, and Ronile was asleep in the living room, there came to her a smell of roses, although it was near Thanksgiving and she was not fortunate enough to be able to keep flowers in the house, and had never cared for perfume. Suddenly, a brilliant light came before her, and through the light emerged a pink rose, then a hand, and then a form so sweet, dressed in a robe of bluish white with a golden border. The form smiled radiantly and taking the hand of the Woman made an exact copy of the pink rose. Then the vision vanished but the rose remained. How she ever got to bed she could not recall. In the morning it seemed as if she had been dreaming, but when she saw the rose she knew the silent visitor was again to give her strength. Ronile took the rose with open mouth and, gazing at her mother, tenderly kissed the flower, saying, "How sweet it smells, mother dear."

There was indeed happiness prevailing. They would go to the Wigwam Theater on Saturday afternoons and enjoy the "Children's Show," which included a candy shower. Often they would go upstairs and sit where the Indians were and they were entertained as much by watching them as they were by the play itself.

In the evenings the Woman worked on the caps and flowers; in the daytime she would sell them. Even Mrs. Neil who doubted the character of divorcees knew by this time that not all divorced women were trying to get some other woman's husband. She helped by purchasing many dainty novelties. How different they felt as they climbed the hill to deliver some of their orders, which resulted in a nice visit and many friendships were formed in this way. On one such trip Ronile was given a small amount of money and she had a dozen places for it. First the Piggy Bank, which for so long had been empty, and she felt that to make the Piggy satisfied it would have to have money in its belly.

The mother gave her the choice of having an ice cream soda or going to a movie show.

Ronile studied awhile and then said, "Which is the cheaper, mother dear?" and the Woman was so amused at her remark that she bought her the soda and took her to the show as well.

Going home that day with light hearts and buoyant steps they had another companion, a collie dog that followed them every time they went down town. The Woman petted him gently and told him of the bone he could have now for they had their own home and were buying their own food and would surely have enough for him.

Her thoughts wandered back to the time when she was employed by the little Butterfly Lady, who was giving an all-day party and she had kept Ronile out in the yard in order that she might not come in contact with the mass of drunken men and women. After the guests had gone she brought the child into the house and she was burning with fever, and asked to be put to bed. She said she had wanted a drink of water for a long time but was afraid to come in the house on account of the noise the guests were making. The mother put her to bed.

The room was very warm but not knowing when the mistress and her friends would return she thought it best to leave her there. She took a peacock feather fan out of her trunk and used it to cool the air about the weary little child. Ronile had always wanted the fan but on account of the delicate feathers and the fact that it had been given her by her husband long ago, the Woman refrained from giving it to her until she had grown to be a young lady. But Ronile did not care about the fan now; she turned her head and closed her eyes for a few minutes and then began to toss and turn in the bed and her fever increased. The mother rushed down to get ice and found that it had all been used in the drinks at the party and she went back to the sick child and with her cold hands tried to soothe her burning brow. If the pleasure-seekers could have seen the mother as she knelt anxiously at the bedside of her sick child, perhaps they would have paused in their desire for lust and pleasure, but it seemed that the Father above

heard her prayer, for a ray of light seemed again to cross the bed and from it emerged the figure of an old lady reaching for the child. With one hand the trembling mother held her and with the other hand she waved back the form, saying: "Oh, no, dearest God, let me keep her to keep faith in You. How can I live without her? I will ask nothing else, oh, Lord, just this one appeal; let me keep her," and looking at the vision she beheld the form of her husband's mother, with her eyes cast upward, repeating, "Thy Will Be Done" and then she vanished. (Two years afterwards the Woman found out that the child's grandmother had died at that time.) For a long time the Woman knelt by the bed, half stunned, watching the sick child who was now sleeping peacefully.

From downstairs there came a scratching sound as if some one was trying to get in. The Woman went down thinking perhaps it was her mistress, but no, it was the dog, Shep, wanting to get in to see his little mistress. She spoke gently to the dog, telling him he would have to be very quiet and that he could go up and see Ronile if he were good. She led him up the stairs and into the sick room. The child's hand hung over the edge of the bed and the dog touched it with his tongue, waking her up. The mother's hands once more folded in earnest prayer and thanksgiving as she repeated also, "Thy Will Be Done."

On Sundays they would walk out to the desert; sometimes to the reservation. Shep was then in his glory, breaking the stillness with his bark and chasing coyotes, running around the Woman and child and barking as if to say, "Are you glad I am with you?" And they would pet him and assure him that they needed him always.

CHAPTER X

BACK TO THE FOLD

The landlady of the house where the Woman and her little girl were living introduced her to a new guest in the colony. She knew the danger of newcomers and tried to have those who lived in her house meet a line of people of respectable standing. She asked the Woman to caution the newcomer about being careful in making the acquaintance of strangers. So the Woman told Mrs. McHenry, the new arrival, that if she ever needed advice to come to her and pointed out a few stations to her, telling her to be careful about entering those with red lights more than any other. Mrs. McHenry had an income of thirty-five thousand dollars a year, which the Woman advised and begged her to say nothing about. Sometimes when Mrs. McHenry saw the light still burning in the Woman's room she would knock gently and enter and after going to the bed and kissing Ronile would come into the kitchen and sit with the Woman, who by this time was making all kinds of flowers. She would look them over, admiring them, and wonder how she could have the patience to work so late.

The Woman smiled sadly, pointing to the bed, saying: "We must all labor, my dear. I labor to keep my child with me; you labor mentally by drowning your consciousness and forgetting your child. You see, Mrs. McHenry, we keep the same hours. I am tired but not weary; you are weary but not tired."

"Yes," said Mrs. McHenry, "I think I shall have to ring up Dr. Charles and ask him to give me a shot in the arm, as otherwise I won't be able to sleep tonight. I am broke; we had such a good time at the Rix this afternoon and I paid the bill."

The Woman put aside her work for the night and made them a cup of tea, and as they were sipping the refreshing beverage, the Woman said: "You don't have to put that deadly drug into your system; make up your mind that tomorrow you will do something worth while."

Think of your child. Beg your husband to bring it to you. I know he will gladly do this; then your mother love will conquer your love of pleasure and you will be a better woman and a happier one."

On another occasion, Mrs. McHenry became quite frightened over the death of a young woman member of the party who had died the night before. She was a victim of absinthe although only twenty years old. Mrs. McHenry said she hated the stuff, and wished she could get away from it. The Woman asked her why she did not get away from it; that she had her baby and could make up her mind to leave it alone forever by spending her time in caring for her child.

"Oh," interrupted the visitor impatiently, "why do you always mention the baby? My mother-in-law takes better care of her than I could."

"But," said the Woman, "God gave you that baby to hold you firm to the path of duty. What will your daughter think of you, *if* (and she emphasized that word *if*) you live to see her grown up? Would you like to see her follow your example? Why do you not be the stalk for that tender plant to grow upon? Without your help she will not be able to climb and there is danger of her being stepped upon." Then pointing to Ronile she said, "There is my hold; even though her frame is small, it steadied my swaying body many times until the storms of life had subsided." The Woman told her of her sad experience with her former employer, how she had submitted to much unpleasantness to keep her child with her.

Many times Mrs. McHenry would dress Ronile and wonder if she would be good enough to dress her own, and as she fondled Ronile a new robe of mother-love seemed to envelop her, and finally, with the help and encouragement of the Woman she returned to her former home, where there were waiting a child, a man and an elderly woman, waiting for a lost one to return to their loving arms, and that night she thanked Fate for bringing her home. She realized that the life of pleasure is often not what we picture it.

"First it fills us to the brim, sometimes running over,"



"Black fears and horrors that soul doth taunt
While grappling with itself in doubt."

—Page 4.

she said; "then we become hardened and calloused and disgusted with ourselves," she continued with an effort. She told them of the death of the young woman only twenty years old, dying a victim of drink; another went to become reconciled with her sweetheart, who rejected her, and they found her dead from gas fumes in a cheap lodging house. "And," she continued, "I want to tell you about a woman who never got tired talking to me. She makes flowers through a vision, she said. I am ashamed now when I think of how I spent money on parties and this woman worked every night to make a flower or boudoir cap and would help me to bed when I knocked at her door after coming home drunk from a party." She hid her face on the shoulder of the man who had also prayed and taught the baby to pray for her mother who was sick, and ask God to bring her back to them.

Then the man spoke: "You see, dear, God uses different ways to answer our prayers, but in most cases he helps us through His children here on earth by showing us the way to help each other."

CHAPTER XI

THEY COULD NOT HEAR HER THOUGHTS

Christmas came, and we find our wanderers walking down town. They passed the church and Ronile was running over to greet the kindly priest who was directing the placing of the Christmas trees to be used in decorating the church. Ronile wondered if the trees belonged to him and if he would place some on the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and one on the window showing the Lord with a lamb in His arms.

"Oh, I hope you will give one to the little lamb for it stands for patience, mother says, and the pines too have patience; they keep their branches green and they don't mind the cold wind and snow."

The Priest looked at the mother admiringly, and in his pleasant Irish way commended her on the nice way she was bringing up her child. "And all alone, ma'am," he said. "She is a credit to you."

As he spoke he reached over and presented Ronile with a small Christmas tree. In her joy she hugged the leg of the laughing priest, then a sadness came over her face as she realized that she could not take the tree with her. They watched her bewilderment for a short time and soon beheld her running with the tree held above her head through the snow to the kitchen door of the parish house to give to Mary, the cook, for safe-keeping. In a moment, she came running back with a cooky which she broke presenting a piece to the priest and one to her mother, and as they left the good priest looked after them mumbling to himself, "A nice little girl, indeed."

A new item was on the list of purchases, and while Ronile was looking at picture books another package was added to the lot. No flowers were made Christmas Eve, and soon Ronile became sleepy and went to bed, first giving another look out of the window to see if anything had been put on her Christmas tree, which had been sent to her home from the parish house. And as she prayed, she asked

God to send her some little angels for her tree, and if they were too busy to go where her father lived and bring her big doll Goldie, with golden curls, and the little princess doll if they could carry them both. She said she knew they would have no one to put them to bed and now that they had a home of their own, they could stay with her all the time. Then she glanced to the window again with a sigh for her lost playmates, and then climbed into bed and soon closed her eyes to human sights to open in a more brilliant light—Fairyland.

It was getting late on Christmas Eve, but the Woman got up and went out, gently closing the door, and hurried downtown before the stores were closed. She purchased a small doll, and hurried back home, hugging the little bundle as she went along, the clear cold wind biting her cheeks, giving new vigor to her body. When she reached home Ronile was still asleep and she went to the task of dressing the doll to take the place of the lost Princess and decided to dress it in pale blue satin, which she trimmed with a silver lace and long train. A Juliet head-gear added the finishing touch and there stood the Princess in all her glory. Now for Goldie, she took Josephine, a doll given Ronile by their good friend Josie, now living in New York, after whom Ronile had named the doll:

By this time the steam in the building had been turned off, so she lighted the gas stove oven to furnish heat while she worked on the doll, and thinking to economize on the heat, she decided to bake a cake, which was the work of only a few minutes, and it would bake while she finished her work of dressing the doll. Soon the doll was dressed even to a knitted sweater and cap and all ready to be placed on the Christmas tree, which was soon trimmed with three glass angels, cotton and tinsel, the dolls underneath, and the cake, now baked and covered with icing and nuts.

The Woman then retired for a few short hours of refreshing sleep, a look of satisfaction on her face knowing she had done her best.

Bright and early Ronile awoke and her first look was for the tree, which she beheld standing on the trunk in all

its glory, and she jumped out of bed and stood before it, not knowing what to touch first.

"The Princess!" she cried. "Oh, my dear little Princess, the angels put a new dress on you." Then she saw Josephine, and ran to her mother who was still asleep, crying, "Look mama, mother, deary, look! Josephine has a new outfit; the angels make the same stitch you do, and they used some of the silver cloth you make the caps of for my dolly." Then she saw the cake and wondered if the angels had baked it, too, and taking both dolls in her arms climbed back into bed. They stayed in bed until the steam was turned on and the house warm, and after breakfast went to church.

Ronile studied the effect of the trees in the church first to make sure that they did not cover the little lamb, and when the priest was in the pulpit she felt like running up and telling him of the three glass angels and her doll, the Princess and all. Her heart was so full of thankfulness she felt that one Our Father was not enough. Her mother told her that God would hear her prayers of thankfulness, but she said, "The priest won't."

After the service she ran to the sacristy and running back to take her mother's hand after thanking the priest in her own way, she felt satisfied. She felt that she had to tell "the man who owned the house of God," thinking the Lord would not hear her thoughts as she assured her mother she herself could not hear them no matter how quiet she was and how much she listened for her own thoughts; there was not a whisper, she said.

"Well, my dear, some day you will hear your thoughts, and I am glad you showed your gratitude to the good priest as well as by thanking God in your thoughts."

CHAPTER XII

THE LITTLE DUTCH PARTY

It was February 15th and Ronile's birthday. The first thing in the morning the mother kissed her tenderly, wishing her a happy birthday, and handing her a complete pencil box, which she had hidden from Ronile by holding it behind her.

At lunch time Ronile's dress was changed to a lace and net frock, with a blue China silk slip underneath it. It was the mother's custom to give Ronile a fancy dress on every birthday, thus keeping her supplied with a good dress all the year. With a promise to keep the dress clean, Ronile walked hurriedly to school, sometimes running and then falling again into a walk step. Her mother had cautioned her about running, fearing that she would fall and soil the dress.

It was agreed among the mothers of several of the children to give Ronile a birthday party and surprise the kiddies. They had arranged for eight couples, eight girls and eight boys. The table decorations were blue and white, Ronile's favorite colors. As the day before had been Valentine Day they cut red crepe paper in the form of angels and strung them from one side of the room to the other and across the chandelier. The angels swayed about and looked as if they were flying around the room. The place cards were valentines, representing boys and girls holding bouquets of flowers, and standing at each plate as if waiting to join the little guests in their happy party. The cakes and cookies were made in the shape of hearts. Mrs. Wilton, the mother of one of the little girls, sent the ice cream, another brought some cake. The lunch consisted of chicken patties, hot chocolate, ice cream and cake. Each of the children brought a small cup and saucer, and Ronile had fancy baskets filled with candy for the girls, and balls for the boys. It is fitting to remark here that up to this time, 1920, Ronile has traveled twenty-five thousand miles and that she still has the little cups and saucers and carries with her as well the memory of her dear little friends who helped to make her birthday party a pleasant remembrance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DIVORCE; THEN TO THE GOLDEN WEST AND NEW FRIENDS

One day the Woman met Judge Jarvis and after inquiring how she was getting along, he asked her how long she had been living in Reno. She informed him that they had been there eight months and he asked her if she had applied for a divorce, to which she replied that they had been so happy she had not thought about a divorce.

"Well," he said, "I have a letter from your lawyer. You must have mentioned my name to him as he asks me to inform him of your whereabouts as he had heard that your husband was coming West. He also sent me the papers in your case and asked me to take it up."

The woman became frightened as she had not given much thought of late to the danger of her husband finding her and taking Ronile, and asked the judge to hurry and file the papers.

The judge then informed her that the lawyer in the East had told the husband that his wife could not be found, but had promised in a friendly way to try and get in touch with them.

The papers were served on the husband but he refused to sign any agreement giving the wife the sole custody of the child.

The lawyer told him the wife had a right to the custody of the little girl as she was supporting her without any help from him. The husband sat chewing the end of his cigar and spoke of going West to contest the case.

"All right," said the lawyer, "but be sure that you take from five to eight thousand dollars with you for there is your family and they have not had any support from you for a long time. The law will hold you responsible for all unpaid bills, besides court costs and lawyer's fees."

The lawyer who served the papers was a friend of both the husband and wife, and advised the husband to sign the paper, but with an insulting remark, he asked the lawyer what he had to do with the affair, how he knew

so much of the wife's business and if he was footing the bills. The case was delayed forty days waiting for the husband to contest it but he did not appear. The lawyer said he hoped he would never again have a mission of the kind to perform for a friend.

The Woman suffered much anxiety during the forty days' delay waiting for her case to come up, fearing at every step she took to see the brutal face of her husband. She spent her spare time visiting the sick at the hospital, taking some flowers to a poor patient. A nurse led her to the room of a woman who had only a short time before come out of the operating room. They left the flowers there, promising to call again the next day, which they did. The patient was an eastern woman and she told them of her misfortune. She was ill, with no money and no home. The Woman's heart went out to her and she promised to take her when she was well enough to leave the hospital. In the meantime, Ronile was sick with the measles and the doctor's bill and the cost of her divorce proceedings soon exhausted her savings. She left Ronile with the landlady the day her fight for freedom came up. It was a short case requiring only a few minutes, as the judge knew her to be a permanent resident and striving for an honest living. She asked permission to assume her maiden name, which was granted. The judge congratulated her, saying she was a good example for the colony, and wished her better luck next time.

As she left the court house, she removed the gold wedding band from her finger and a sigh escaped her lips as she placed the ring in her purse, her memory reverting back to that day when she felt that life held nothing but happiness for her.

When Ronile recovered from the attack of measles, the doctor advised a change of climate, and they decided to go to San Francisco. The Woman thought that she could handle the silk flowers through the stores there to good advantage, and could be at home a good part of the time.

Ten months had passed, when they again stood on the platform of the Reno station, though this time not *alone*. Many friends had come to bid them good-by. Among

them there was a young druggist who insisted that the Woman marry him and that they would start life anew. The Woman rejected the offer, saying that she had been free only a short time and would have to find herself. He made her promise to write, and after a short time he left Reno for China. Ronile enjoyed the ride in the train more this time. The snow was still heavy above Truckee and the Sierra Mountains were covered with snow-sheds, and there was Donner Lake, named after the Donner family who had perished like so many of the early pioneers.

It seemed only a short distance when they found themselves in a warm climate. The orange trees were in full bloom and fruit and flowers abounded on all sides—such a wealth of hills and mountains and clear blue sky. Little did they care where they would land, so long as the sky was blue and the trees in bloom. God was everywhere and they trusted to His love, their hearts filled with gladness, as they fell asleep, rocking along the mountain pass to a new and brighter life.

The clock on the Ferry Building indicated eight as the boat from Oakland began to unload its passengers. They stood on the street wondering where to go to find a desirable place to stop. A bus from the Hotel Alten drew up, and not having any place in view they got in the bus and soon found themselves registered in this hotel on East Third Street, paying five dollars a week for their room. The Woman set to work at once buying new material and making up some samples of the ribbon flowers, which she took to the stores and soon received many orders. Thus the little ribbon flowers were soon to be found on the counters and pinned to the coats and dresses of many girls and women.

A buyer in one of the stores, noticing the address of the Woman, told her that it was not a good neighborhood and advised her to move to the Regis, which she did.

Soon after their arrival in San Francisco, the Woman wrote to their friend Hannah in Reno and told her she hoped soon to be able to send her money enough to come to her, as she was sure there was work for her there, and the first check she received went back to Reno to bring Hannah to them. On her arrival a cot was placed in their

room for her, and they were happy in the thought of helping each other.

The Woman had originated the fancy evening caps and had a suit case filled with sample flowers and caps ready to show to a lady whose address she received from a store, the lady wishing a cap to match a certain gown. But in some way there was a mistake in the address, and she did not find the lady. She inquired at the next house and an old gentleman answered the call. On seeing her disappointment he asked her if he could serve her in any way. She showed him the suit-case of flowers, and he started back at the sight of their beauty and on touching them was much surprised to find that they were made of silk.

"You make them?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," replied the Woman.

"Where do you live?" he kept on. "Are you alone?"

"No," she told him, "I have a daughter and a friend."

He said he was interested in such an interesting person and wanted to know her name, which she told him. At six o'clock the phone rang, and she was told that there was a gentleman who wished to see Mrs. Delien. A few minutes later he stood at their door, seeming to drink in a picture that he did not see every day. By the window in the rocking chair sat Hannah, and on the trunk Ronile with a book in her hand. The stranger walked over toward her, and she jumped down, taking his extended hand and making a curtsy worthy of the dames of old. He picked her up and kissed her on the forehead and called her "Little Princess."

"Oh, no," she said, "the Princess is in the trunk, with silver lace on her dress." As she rubbed her forehead where he had kissed her, he said, "Now you are wiping off the kiss I gave you."

"No, I just wiped off the tickle your whiskers made," which made all three laugh and seem like old friends.

He told Mrs. Delien that he was alone and desired very much to have them join him at dinner. Looking at Hannah, who seemed willing, the Woman accepted the invitation and all went to a prominent place to dine. During the dinner, the gentleman ventured to suggest that their

quarters were too small for three to live in; that Hannah needed a separate room, inasmuch as she was convalescing from a recent illness. Taking out his card he wrote an address on it, advising the Woman to inquire there for an apartment saying he was sure she would get one that would be more suitable for them. The next day they went and found a large apartment house. Japanese porters were busy about the halls and the rooms were clean and inviting. The superintendent was very obliging and showed them a four-room apartment, beautifully furnished. The rent was reasonable and they took it, happy to be able to cook and keep house. Hannah had a relapse and the Woman took her to the German Hospital for another operation. Business was good, but as her expenses were quite heavy it kept her busy making ends meet. The operation cost her two hundred dollars and she paid seventeen dollars and fifty cents a week for the room at the hospital for Hannah. This was an expense she was not prepared to meet. Mr. Bartells, the gentleman who had advised them to move into the larger apartment house, wanted to assist her but she declined, thinking if he wanted to help the girl he could have gone to the hospital and paid her bill there. He wanted to take the Woman to his ranch, which offer she refused. She felt that if his intentions were right in wanting to help her he could show his kindness by helping Hannah, and the next time he made an offer of assistance she told him to "help the helpless."

He replied that the girl was an adventuress. "Be on your guard. Hannah plays on your sympathies, and I warn you against her. Human nature is an open book to me, I know them when I see them," he assured her.

The Woman thought only of the sick, helpless girl, and thought by sowing seeds of kindness they could not help but thrive, so she let him talk and did what she thought was right and human. After three weeks Hannah was back with a good chance of regaining her health.

The old friend expressed a wish one evening to play cards, but the Woman replied that she knew absolutely nothing about cards, and he offered to teach her. Hannah could play and was happy to get the opportunity. How

it amused our hero to see Mrs. Delien try to shuffle the cards, spilling them all over until he would take them and cleverly deal them for her.

On one occasion he suggested a dinner at home, saying he would supply a chicken from his ranch. Hannah was a good cook. In fact she made her living cooking before she became ill, and she was anxious to show her skill.

It was Wednesday evening when they had the dinner. While Hannah washed the dishes the Woman put Ronile to bed, the guest amusing himself by walking about the rooms—from dining room to living room. He passed the bedroom door and saw Ronile saying her prayers as she knelt by the bed. He walked into the room and picking her up said, "It is not necessary for you to tire your dear little knees for something that doesn't exist; go to sleep and think of your Foxy Grandpa," as she called him.

The Woman stood aghast, hardly able to speak, but quickly composed herself and ignoring the man, bent over the child and went over with her the prayer she had been saying. He left the room stroking his beard, and when the Woman came into the dining room he was sitting at the table dealing the cards. He tried to say something but the look the Woman gave him made him realize that he was outside of that sacred gate of faith and argument was not the password to enter there.

There was some coolness between them for the remainder of the evening. They were playing cards and he tried to touch her hand but she pulled back as if a viper had stung her. On leaving, he asked if he might come to dinner on the following Wednesday, which she granted. The following Saturday they went to the beach, thinking the ocean breeze would be invigorating for Hannah. They climbed the hill at the Cliff House and made themselves comfortable, eating their lunch under the trees with much relish. It did not take Ronile long to make friends; she found them everywhere; was never lonely; a flower would amuse her for hours and seldom did she ever come home without a bunch of some kind of flowers, given her by someone.

In searching the hill now for flowers, she came to a

woman knitting and asked her if she wanted the flowers she had already picked. The lady told her she did not want to rob her of the lovely bunch. Ronile pulled out the nicest ones and handed them to the stranger.

"Oh," said the lady, "you have given me the best ones."

"Well," said the child, "one time in Reno, there was a little boy I used to play with who moved away, and he asked his mother if he could give me something, and she said he could, so he gave me his ball, because he loved it, he said; so you see if I love these the best, you will love them, too. I never look at the ball without thinking of little Bobby and I love him, too."

Hannah by this time had come to take the little chatterbox back to her mother. The lady said she did not mind her a bit, and thought she was a very clever little tot. Then Hannah told the lady some of Ronile's original remarks. They brought the stranger back to meet the mother of the wonderful child. The lady sat with them talking and knitting away, the needles keeping time harmoniously. The lady remarked about the Woman's perfect form. She told them she was a masseuse, and looking at Hannah's strong hands and round finger tips, said that Hannah had missed her real profession.

"Why, you were born to massage," she said. Hannah looked at her friend in an interested way, thinking that this was an opportunity to learn a new occupation. They asked the lady if she taught massage, and she agreed to teach Hannah the business on terms which were satisfactory to Mrs. Delien who offered to loan Hannah the money, thinking if Hannah earned as much as the lady assured her she could, she would soon pay back the money advanced.

At the next dinner party, to which Mr. Bartells had been invited, the Woman told him of the wonderful opportunity which had been presented to Hannah to learn a good paying profession. He did not seem much enthused over the prospect of the Woman advancing money to Hannah, and after sending her on an errand, he stood before the Woman with a deep frown on his brow.

“My dear little friend,” he said, “you are not safe here alone; your spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and you will break down under the strain.” He told her how he had traced Hannah’s past as far back as he could and that her last employer had discharged her on account of a courtship with a Mexican tamale peddler. He showed the Woman why Hannah had no trunk or wearing apparel, while she had garments for all occasions.

“She is imposing upon you, madam, and I want to spare you a sad awakening,” and with trembling voice he said, “Why, I love you, and have loved you ever since I met you. Life seems perfect when I am with you. Send this person away; she is not your equal, and should not be classed as a friend. She is so uncouth that people will misjudge you, saying that birds of a feather flock together. I would show you real people, society; I have the password to all. You love beautiful things; let me take you to my castle and give me the pleasure of seeing you admire my treasures.”

The Woman listened attentively, carefully studying the step at this turn of the road, and asked him to give her time to think before answering him. He gladly agreed to this, and left with a triumphant look on his face.

CHAPTER XIV

AT THE CROSS-ROADS—WEALTH OR FAITH

In thought the Woman stood at the cross-roads, one leading to a broad, well kept avenue, too broad and too long for weary feet to travel; its travelers sat languishing in limousines, with etiquette their critic, which sometimes seemed to lash them unmercifully. They did not seem to be free to act as they wished, lest the fast traveling tongue of slander might reach them through the lorgnettes and monocles of others as unhappy as themselves. She could see the tired faces smiling sweetly through the mask, inwardly harboring a volcano of desires and unsatisfied ambitions. One woman was weeping as she gazed at an emerald ring, and wished it were a ruby like that worn by a friend at a tea party. Another head was bent low with sharp pains at the temple, caused by wearing a heavy crown. Thousands pass the road of idleness leading to despair, leaving their children to servants, with a cold kiss and meaningless pet name; always thinking of more capital; tightening the grip; holding the lower classes of mankind in the valley of H. C. L.

She smiled sadly as she thought how the servants in her own home would call Ronile a gracious little lady, or "as you please, miss," and then how a short time ago they refused her work and a home for that same child. She choked down a lump of bitterness that had arisen in her throat and resolved not to give up her freedom for admission to such a road. But to give up one she must travel the other, a narrow lane full of briars and thorns, but sometimes a shady place to rest and a cooling drink and there were many fragrant flowers they could pick with dewdrops in their tiny cups—"tears from aching hearts." There were long stretches of barren land, such as they had passed. Her eyes lifted up to God for help, and as she gazed into that long stretch filled with innumerable stars shining in all their soothing brilliance, her thoughts wandered back to faith—if he would believe as she and Ronile believed, the bargain would be made.

When Hannah returned the Woman told her of Mr. Bartells' desire to become a member of the family. Hannah tightened her lips, an ugly look coming into her eyes, showing more clearly than words the feeling of jealousy which enveloped her.

"So," she said, "that is why he sent me out, to get me out of the way." But the Woman stopped her, saying it was a very serious matter with her; then dancing around the room Hannah said: "Yes, why don't you marry him? Then he can start me in a beauty parlor and sanitarium," thinking only of what she could get out of him, not of the Woman's sacrifice.

Slowly Mrs. Delien realized that all is not charity, though given in true faith and agreed that Mr. Bartells was right in his opinion of Hannah. As an outsider he could see through her actions. She turned to Hannah saying: "Why don't you try to interest the man in taking you? As far as I am concerned you can have him with all his wealth."

At Mr. Bartells' next visit they resumed the card playing, and Mrs. Delien made slow progress at learning. The guest showed no impatience, but seemed to take pleasure in touching her hand in explaining the game. Hannah thought, "Now is my chance to let him know his attentions are welcome to me," so she slyly touched his foot, but he thinking it an accident paid no attention to her. She tried again, slightly tapping her foot on his. He looked around wondering whose foot was running astray, half wishing it to be an answer from the Woman. Looking at her he saw only a far-away look, half-appealing, half-worried and he knew that the signal was not from her.

He laid down the cards and looked squarely at Hannah, saying, "Why do you let yourself fly apart?" and pointing to his head with an amused expression and raising his eyebrows said: "Something loose, eh, Hannah, poor girl? Keep your mechanism together and don't let your feet run away from you."

The Woman joined in the laugh on Hannah, who, at the remark, sat biting her lips, too surprised to speak.

On departing Mr. Bartells begged the Woman to re-

ceive him the next day, and to be sure that she gave him a satisfactory answer, touching his pocket to remind her of his wealth—that wealth is might and might is power to surmount all obstacles they might encounter.

Before the Woman retired she opened all the windows to clear the room of the foul air and finding herself alone for a little while, she knelt on the floor by the window, resting her arms on the sill. Looking up to the sky, only an occasional star was visible, as a fog was creeping along in the air. Fervently she prayed to the Almighty Judge and Adviser, asking for enlightenment, for guidance to know the right road. She called to her sacred visitor who came to her so often, and as she knelt, sobbing out the prayer, "Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy," a star approached showing a divine face, then disappeared. The next day a box of flowers came which she held to her bosom, sobbing into them, pitying their mission, to be the forebearer of good or evil. She kissed them tenderly, assuring them that they could not make her sell herself.

When Mr. Bartells arrived, she greeted him in a sincere, composed way, and as he extended his hand he came near her as if to kiss her, but she moved back slowly and he made no further advances. After seating himself comfortably and asking permission to smoke, which was granted, he took a few puffs at his cigar and looking toward the Woman in an admiring glance, simply asked, "Well?" There was a long pause, during which he puffed on his cigar, and then smiled somewhat pertly as he asked, "Is it so hard to throw yourself into the arms of a man who loves you and wants to shield you from harm? You will be a lady; no more twisting your poor little hands on those flowers."

"Oh," she said, "the flowers made me an artist."

"What of that? Art keeps you starving!"

"Well," she said, "we have never begged yet, and we three live on them."

"We'll forget the flowers."

"No," said the Woman, thinking now was her chance to tell him how she learned to make them, if he was sincere, which he seemed to be, but she could not go far with senti-



" 'Tis the good ship Salvation that cuts thru the waves
To rescue the souls from their watery graves."

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mental stuff, as he called it. He got up and walked around the room in a domineering way, the woman thought.

"Remember," he said, trying to control his agitation, "I am a business man; a very positive nature, I assure you."

"I realize that," the Woman replied, agreeing that she too was not negative when it came to one's choice of happiness. She was so far above him in faith that she could find no linking current of spiritual atmosphere to connect with the material planet in which he lived, so she gave up the idea of showing him the chamber of her soul's refuge.

Seeing he could not use force with her, he spoke of Ronile, how very necessary it was that she should have a good education. "Money is the key which opens the gate to the palace of education."

"But," said the Woman, "you agreed that Ronile was exceptionally refined, without big resources to draw from for her education. So far I have not received much encouragement from the educated people."

"I see you don't like society; then why not put Ronile in a first-class boarding school, and I will take you traveling; on a trip around the world," describing a circle with his arm.

"Have you never been abroad?" asked the Woman.

"No," he replied, "I first had to make money, loads and loads of it, and now I wish to do something with it," looking at her with a slight bow.

"Well," said the Woman, "I have been around the world, and the only reason I would wish to do it again would be to take Ronile."

He pulled his hand out of his pocket, and with a gesture as if to shake off something unpleasant, he reminded her again of her position with a small income. There was a look almost of pity as she gazed at him and asked him how he could give her the love that Ronile gave.

"You are even now impatient because I do not see things your way. We have seen poverty, so great, that our hearts ache to think of it now, but we found an inner conscience, even forgetting our own suffering to help others, learning the power of mind over matter, and not domineer-

ing over those even less fortunate than ourselves. We learned to respect the law in all stages, and the law I am now respecting is the law of difference in ages. You try to reach back thirty years for a life partner. How can you bridge a thirty-year channel? You judge from the standpoint of a sixty-year-old man; I from a thirty-year-old woman. If I follow the glitter of your gold, I am blinded and to be blind means darkness." She looked him full in the face.

How he admired her as she fought, thinking she had the spirit of a tigress. "But, I'll break it when I get you."

Her tongue was loose, speech came easily, and when he asserted that she had nothing to consider, she answered sharply, "Thirty years of my life." She walked toward the writing desk, on which lay some of the roses, her roses, and holding one up she said, "Perhaps in thirty years I will have as much as you. They took me out of misery once; they will lead me on."

He took his hat and left with a short good-by, saying, "I always get what I want and I don't stop until I get it."

The next morning Hannah was doing the marketing, and he took this opportunity to come before Ronile went to school. Mrs. Delien went to answer a knock at the door, thinking Hannah had returned, but the sound of someone clearing his throat reached her ears and she ran back, telling Ronile that Mr. Bartells was at the door and to tell him mother could not see him. But he was not so easily repressed, and thinking that he was unwelcome at such an early hour, he told Ronile to tell her mother he wanted to see her on important business. The mother sent Ronile back to the door to tell him she was not receiving visitors in negligee.

He assured Ronile that he liked to see ladies in flimsy attire, and hearing this remark Mrs. Delien took it as a personal insult. She went to the phone and summoned the superintendent of the building, and in a loud voice asked him to come up as soon as possible. On hearing this, the indiscreet caller fled, and was out of sight before the superintendent, who was rapidly approaching, could reach their door. He rang the bell and asked politely what he

could do for her. In a trembling voice, she told him that if Mr. Bartells called again not to let him up as she did not want to be bothered with him any more.

"Oh," wailed the man, "he is our boss, and we wondered why he had been so nice to us lately; we thought surely you would belong here," looking around with a lost expression, and shaking his head. "Now he won't buy us that vacuum cleaner we need so badly. It will be hard for me to tell the owner of the building to mind his own business; I surely will lose my job."

The Woman thanked him and said she would move as soon as she could get ready. When Hannah came home she told her of the event and that they would have to move as soon as possible if they wanted to live in peace. Hannah was pleased, as a change was always welcome to her adventurous nature and besides the old fellow had never been much in her favor. She told the Woman she did right in refusing to spend the rest of her life feeding bread and milk to an old man.

However, Mrs. Delien's suspicions became aroused, and thinking she had done her duty in helping Hannah thus far, she told her that she would have to shift for herself, saying that the season was slack in her business and that she could do better in the east; that she would go back as far as Chicago and try to get the flowers in the big stores. Hannah stood awhile in pensive thought, with a determined look on her broad face. She was not willing to give up her "meal ticket" if she could help it, but the Woman assured her that she had gone the limit and that she could not do any more for her.

Hannah was somewhat angry and said: "Now just when I wanted and could pay you back you throw me aside. I have so many friends in the east. I cooked for two years at a summer resort and there were lots of people who would have taken massages. The season will soon be open and if you will lend me the fare, I promise you before God to send you every cent of money that I owe you, if I have to work my finger tips off to do it."

The Woman smiled in a half-bored way, and in a sarcastic voice replied: "You half chew them off now. I have

often told you to keep your fingers out of your mouth. I abhor such a habit, and you should break yourself of it. I don't care to have Ronile see such actions."

Mr. Bartells called on the telephone many times, and in going out the Woman and little girl left through the servants' entrance to avoid meeting him, but when a determined man makes up his mind to accomplish anything he will not rest until he has done so, and he watched—he seemed to live there now, steadily. The Woman was under a great nervous strain; a haunted look came into her eyes; at the sound of a telephone or door-bell she would jump and run, not knowing where to go.

Hannah managed to make excuses for her, and often the Woman wondered how she could lie to Bartells and find excuses so clever on the impulse of the moment. Often she would feel sorry for Hannah and wonder why she had not profited by her help as she had tried so hard to help her make something of herself, but in that coarse soil no tender plant will ever root, but the answer would ring back vividly: "Behold the Master healed ten of leprosy and only one returned to thank Him," but His deed is registered in the Book of Mankind, as an example to us, and those examples will live forevermore and multiply to grow to mammoth trees in faith in many soils that live on earth.

The superintendent informed the owner that they were moving and before Hannah, who answered the door-bell, could find time to make an excuse, Mr. Bartells pushed her aside and entered. The Woman was writing and her thoughts were still on her task, so when he appeared she met him quite calmly, and asked him to be seated. His body twitched with agitation. He didn't know how to begin.

He got up and paced the floor for awhile, then stopping before her said: "Do I hear aright, that you are contemplating going away? If my perseverance has in any way molested you, pray forgive me, for I did not intend at any time to hurt your feelings in the least," and he took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow as if to brush away troubled thoughts. After a little he continued: "Please don't think I am a brute, just because I want the dearest

little woman in all the world, and went at it the wrong way. I assure you it was intended in the utmost sincerity."

She pitied him and looking straight at him said: "Perhaps it is not to be, for if I was to have you I would want you and all the world could not interfere. Fate stands between us, guided by faith. They just seem to hold me. I cannot submit myself to the thought of belonging to you."

"Fate! What is fate?" he demanded. "Why should anything control your mind and body but yourself? I would like to see anything but my own will power control me," and he laughed triumphantly at his might over himself.

"Yes," said the Woman, "you would not let faith enter into your system, then why do you want to control another's soul and body? Why should I give up my faith just because you desire it? If you did not want my inner self, why then do you want to tear down an altar I have built with tears of sorrow?" He did not interrupt her, and she continued: "Those tears have formed a seat for God. I call it 'Mother of Pearl,' and that does not break easily, does it?" she asked him sadly. "So strong is that place that He remains there ever with an all-seeing eye that sees the inner self more than the outer. Perhaps you have not wept much in your life."

"It is not manly," he answered. "Women weep for both."

"Yes," she answered, "if men would weep for their own sins and not pile all the blame on the woman they would not worship at the altar of selfishness to buy another woman's soul."

The intelligence of her speech startled him and turning to her he said, "What books do you read?"

"The Bible and I read fairy tales to Ronile."

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "my time is mostly taken up in working to support us. My eyes are tired when I finish with the needle and therefore I just keep Ronile in a happy state of mind by reading something in large print about fairies."

"But where do you get the idea of tears making Mother of Pearl?"

"My inner self," she replied simply.

"But where lives your No. 2?" he asked in a sarcastic way.

"My No. 2? What do you mean?"

"Why that inner self you are talking about."

"Just ME," she said; "the woman you are trying with all your might to get; the awakening of your soul is slowly manifesting itself. You crave companionship, but not seeing the road leading through deprivation to the light, you seek in vain in darkness of selfishness, to win a form gliding beyond your reach. Remember when once you travel that road of hardship and deprivation, you become accustomed to the pricks of thorns and briars, even learning to go without food at times, for you feed on the knowledge the soul gathers in serving hungry hearts.

"In return the soul brings gratitude, a wonderful food that keeps fresh and nourishes miraculously, and so the body feeds in a spiritual way, not claiming but giving, the soul using the body like a plant in a pot—it grows there if kept from weeds and gnawing insects called temptation, and then when those spiritual blossoms bloom, the tie is bound by the Trinity divine. You see, that is why the jewels and splendors of the material earth-plane have no charm for one who communicates with the stars; they co-operate in a divine union and charm its earthly transmitters more joyously than all the diamonds combined."

There was a holy look on her face and he, thinking she suffered with religious insanity, changed the subject by inquiring when they would leave and what their destination would be. The Woman still lingering on a sacred plane in thought, told him she had no destination, perhaps would go back to Reno or Chicago. She had relatives in Nebraska and was thinking of paying them a visit, but did not mention that to the inquirer.

"Are you taking Hannah?" he asked.

"Perhaps," she replied. "Hannah wants to pay me back and is quite enthusiastic about treating people on the train to make money."

He looked amused, then laughed shortly and pointing to his eye, said, "Do you see any money in my eye?"

"No," she replied, "but I can almost hear it, that is all I see in you—that emblem of the dollar."

Ignoring her remark, he continued, "Well, just that much and less will you get from Hannah, not even a thank you."

The Woman, however, thought his animosity was caused by jealousy, and said: "Well, I will try anyway. She was in the hospital and suffered much. I, too, was ill in Reno and ready to go, but God put me on the road to recovery, because I asked Him to help me."

"Well," he asked, "why didn't He help Hannah? You helped yourself with your will power and Hannah is a leech; she has no power of her own; otherwise she would not hang around and live on you. She is twice your size and able to help herself."

"Oh," wearily answered the Woman, "I found the way to lead her to better living and make her see by keeping her in my environment and doing my best to help her."

"Well," he said, "your plan has failed, for every chance she gets, out she goes. Where did you send her Tuesday night?"

"For her lesson," the Woman replied.

"I am sorry to tell you she went to a show with the butcher's clerk. What did she tell you when she came home at one o'clock?"

"Why she told me she got an extra lesson as she wanted to finish so she could go back soon."

"Have you the teacher's telephone number?" and he walked toward the telephone. He called up and after getting the connection asked if Hannah had been there Tuesday night, and then beckoned Mrs. Delien to take the receiver. The answer confirmed Mr. Bartells' statement that Hannah had not taken a lesson Tuesday night, and he had a half victorious smile on his face as the Woman told him that he was right. "Exposing the tricks of this impostor will bring her down from her spiritual perch," he thought.

As the Woman slowly seated herself he stood with his

back toward the windows, facing her, drinking in eagerly the satisfaction of seeing a soul in sore distress. He did not have to hide his face from the light for the Woman was far away, and a sad sigh was all he heard.

Coming forth he said, "I have told you, but experience seems to be your only teacher, as you pay no attention to warnings."

She sighed again pondering over the word "warning." In her heart she could not give up trying to save a decaying plant. Had she not found her between life and death? Did she not transplant her in new soil? If the old plant should succumb, would not the sprouts thrive and cover the dry remains of the once living plant? If God gave her patience and meant to help Hannah, why not continue? If she lost, well, then, did she not lose seven years of labor, love, youth and health on an unworthy husband? Should she now give up this universal sister-love because she found her friend unworthy? What if she won? Like Mrs. McHenry, in helping to give a child its mother and a husband the answer to ardent prayer; God must use her as a channel to work through, therefore, she would serve Him at all times.

Then she said, "What do you mean by warning?"

"Just a signal to beware, that is all, to make you heed the consequences of ingratitude. Are you not afraid of the future, the pain and disappointment this person will lead you to?"

"No," said the Woman, "there is no fear where justice reigns. Righteousness and justice go to the gallows rather than submit to weakness. Why did Joan of Arc try in her primitive way to free her country? She was only a slip of a girl, a peasant, who hardly knew how to read or write, yet in that form was enough power to conquer a nation. Why did not King Charles of France hear the call? Because he was blinded by lust and pleasure, overfed—too much wine and women to hear the call. It was left to the power of a little frail woman, ignorant of what was before her, yet willing to proceed wherever fate led her through her faith."

"It was love for her country," the man said.

"Well, why can I not do something for mankind? My country is universal; is it not possible for God to embody in woman the power to labor for peace?"

"Joan of Arc is history," said the man.

"Yes, and so are we," answered the Woman, sharply. "It is the duty of mothers to bring up their children to love one another and give each one a chance to unfold its talents, as well as a right to live in harmony, not some in the valleys and others in state. Take your servants, for instance. You said that you liked books and you know them, but you keep them behind glass doors, away from those who live to serve you, and in the end they lay down their tools and pass into another life, with nothing but the bow of obedience or the mark of Cain on their brow."

"What do you mean by that?"

"A bugle call," she answered. "When finance ties the hands of justice and commerce blindfolds her, and greed for more oils the machinery with human blood and speculates with lives on the money market. Then with a banner of national colors, a song of the country, they fall blindly in the holes they dug for each other, only realizing in their dying breath that they had killed a brother and so they die smiling at each other, these enemies as they join hands to knock at the gateway of the East where every morning the sun rises with rays of love and life, not forgetting any saint or sinner, each day a new chance. There they meet the Shepherd of the fold gathering them in for He has bled for mankind and many have forgotten Him."

Standing with hands in his pockets, Bartells sized her up, highly amused, saying, "Why does not God stop these bloody wars?"

The Woman said: "He tried it by becoming man but they crucified Him and after they knew He was the Saviour, just as they did Joan of Arc. Why don't these mighty men produce instead of speculating; why don't they work on a universal basis, treating all alike? Is not America called God's country? Why, because it is the Island of Refuge, its shores are open to everyone, and the immigrants have proved worthy. They tilled the soil, finding wealth everywhere. If ever the gates are closed and the

shores no longer bear the sign of refuge, they will stop digging and think more, which they have not done so far. Living came easy, the efficient newspapers do the thinking and they will give the bugle call; the masses assemble and go where directed. When they get to the end and devastation they will think of the false alarm, like the herder that called the townspeople the first time and laughed at their approach. When the wolf came and the cry came again they paid no heed, for once a liar always a liar."

"Oh," said the man. "You hit it. Hannah will never stop and you will eventually get left."

"Well, I will just fail on one person and when she meets the other kind a remembrance will remain. She will think of me, like the Nation thinks of Abraham Lincoln. Tell me," she said, "why do we love Lincoln best?"

"I suppose because he freed the slaves," he answered.

"Ah," she said. "Freed the slaves, and now the world is filled with them. How many young women tread the streets with painted lips waiting for the bidder of the slave market?"

"It is their own fault, there is plenty of work for all but they are too lazy to work; they would rather have nice dresses and jewels."

"Who charms them?" asked the Woman, to which he made no reply. "Man," she said. "They are all lured slowly, like a child who is lured by a stick of candy, and most of them fall in the attempt to accomplish an ambition and man preys on them, promising assistance but does not stop until he accomplishes their downfall. Being stripped of the wings of innocence and purity the slave has no more ambition to try and so leads more victims to the valley of despair. Believe me," she said, sadly, as though she were suffering with them, "the wages of sin is death, and some of these men wonder why their sons and daughters go astray, never thinking that they are following in the old man's path. There is no other way for them to go; a turnip will not grow where a carrot is planted."

He touched her head and said, "My poor little

philosopher, why do you rack your brain by worries and cares of the outside world?"

"Because I am one of its inhabitants," she replied.

"But, my child, you must not worry for others. Who worries for you?"

"That is true," she replied. "Many will follow my trail if they see me smiling. You know the saying: 'Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone.' I have done my share of weeping, and now I am going to smile alone. Therefore I do not worry about destination. If I give, I will receive, and my intention is to give if only a smile."

"Take me with you," he said.

"No, but I will write to you," and he left, thinking she would come back and forget all about her socialistic views.

In a short time, the business was arranged, and taking Hannah with them, the Woman and little girl were soon on the ferry ready to make the overland trip. Mr. Bartells was there, feeling sure he would find out where they were going.

Hannah saw him and whispered, "There he is." Fearing that he might follow, Mrs. Delien did not want him to see the tickets. He was close behind as they passed the gates and she had to show her ticket to the gateman. Hannah was behind the old gentleman, and noticing him putting on his glasses with the intention of looking over the Woman's shoulder at the tickets, she dropped to the floor with a cry of pain as she said, "Oh, my foot." He turned around quickly to help her. She looked at him in a half-painful, half-amused way and hobbled on through the gate.

In the meantime the Woman had the tickets safely tucked away in her hand-bag and the old gentleman had quite a deep frown on his face, giving Hannah anything but a blessing. He tipped the porter, cautioning him to take good care of the little party, especially the child, and asking him to see that she did not meet with any harm in getting on or off the train at some desolate station. Another farewell and a promise from the Woman to write him and

the train rolled on leaving an old heart sad and disgusted and a young soul proud of victory.

Passing through Wyoming, Ronile showed signs of fever; it grew as the night went on, and next day she was quite ill making it necessary to stay over at Grand Island. The Woman gave Hannah her ticket to New York with enough money to give her a start, saying it was bad enough to take a sick child to visit relatives.

When they were comfortably settled at the home of relatives, they called a physician who on examining the child pronounced it smallpox. Seeing the frightened look on the mother's face he assured her that it was a varioloid case and that if she did not scratch herself there might not be any scars left. The good Dr. Penn did his best but by the bedside of a very ill child knelt the mother, quarantined, holding the twitching hand of an agonized sufferer—even the eyes had blisters filled with matter. She would herself make the mask over the child's face and for five days and nights no sleep entered those anxious eyes, as she knelt mostly by the bed of her child, suffering as she did, laying her head close to hers, singing, with tears rolling down her cheeks, "Jesus, Little Shepherd, Hear Me, Bless Your Little Lamb Tonight." She thought of how He healed the lepers, and that He would heal Ronile. Food was untouched for days. She only prayed; not alone, however, for many transparent forms were around the bed administering to child and mother, always saying, "Thy Will Be Done." Their gentle touch thrilled her and forgotten at times was her task of weaving at the robe of patience. Well did she stand her test and the first time Ronile sat up the mother looked her over and found not a scar.

Then for the first time she ran out with clasped hands praising God and all His spiritual co-workers. There was plenty of fresh milk, honey and eggs, and after five weeks Ronile was quite herself again. The folks, good religious people, were glad that it just happened so that they had a long visit. They took them over their large ranches and poultry yards and showed them what they accomplished with homesteads. There were large alfalfa and wheat fields like an ocean. The young wheat swayed gently as though

blown by an unseen breath, a holy breath, the Woman thought.

On account of the season they left, with hopes of coming to stay the next time when they came west again to go to the World's Fair.

"Anna," the cousin said, "isn't it funny? She'll tell you years ahead what she is going to do and goes and does it. To think she goes scooting across the continent making her way as she goes on. Well, good luck to you and God bless you, till we meet again." So they parted crying on all sides, the folks remarking, "Just when we get used to them they leave us."

"Well," said the Woman, "it is better to stop when things taste best than to be overfed and battle with indigestion." They smiled through their tears, waving another good-by and good luck, as the train rolled out of sight like a black line cutting through the thickness of today to bring its load to a better tomorrow.

There were some friends at the station when the train pulled up in Chicago. After their greeting the men decided to go for some refreshments, eyeing Ronile with critical looks, however, wanting to be on the safe side of a drink first. If any of those smallpox germs were running astray it would be better to take a brandy. As Ronile had no marks they finally decided that it could not have been smallpox.

The Woman only said, "We are in an era of time when science, skill and prayer have found a way to keep perfect as your Father in heaven," and she smiled pensively as she went on, "We lived with God in that trying time; why then can she not return perfect in His name?"

After a few days' rest with good friends, the Woman soon had an ambition to lead her flowers to the Chicago counters. She bought some materials and to the surprise of her friends with flying fingers, the beautiful flowers grew. Then she went and bought a dress for herself, a white silk poplin with black satin collar and cuffs embroidered in red silk, and a row of white buttons graced the simple little frock. She trimmed a white Milan straw hat with different shades of silk roses, matching the Tea,

Marshall Neil and American Beauty roses cleverly to good advantage for her brown eyes and hair. Then she bought a pair of black pumps, with white silk stockings and with a red rose pinned to her waist, she looked like she had come newly created from some Paris shop. She took a small box and placed the samples in it and made her way to the largest store. One friend told her that the morning would be a better time, but the Woman said the flowers would find their way any time and so they did.

Coming back she waved a large order list and when they asked her how she did it, she said, "Well, I just asked for the head buyer and then I went and opened the box, that's all I ever have to do."

One of the gentlemen said, "Why some people have to wait around for days to see that man; that shows you that ignorance is bliss."

"No," said the Woman, "novelty has the lead, for everybody wants something new."

One of the gentlemen, an old friend who knew her before her marriage, and the mistake of her choice, as they called it, winked at the rest, and in a jolly tone asked her why she did not make up her mind to get married again. "I never thought she could beat him," meaning the husband.

"Nor did I," replied the other.

"Say, did you hear that? He is now living with his niece, and they have a little boy. A friend just told me who met him at the Club as he stopped over in Pittsburgh."

"Whose little boy?" asked the other.

Shrugging his shoulders, and raising his brow, the first gentleman replied, "Don't know."

"How does he explain the origin of the boy, when he refused, faking lumbago, to get out of supporting his own child?"

"Well," said the other, "he seems very fond of that boy, who is kind of idiotic."

There was a startled expression on all sides. The Woman looked down at the finger where once the band had clung, that means so much, the ring that binds two for

better or worse, and she stroked the hand as if in a soothing way to tell it, that the step they took was a wise one.

"Idiotic?" echoed the party.

"Yes," said the speaker, "he wants to have the boy operated on; thinks it would loosen the tongue."

"Does he claim to be the boy's father?" asked one of the women.

"No," said the man, "he says he adopted him just because he can't see his own child."

"Oh," said the other, "had to, I suppose. That white-slaver. He is a detriment to the race. How good it is for her (pointing to the Woman) that she left him in time. I would not trust that scoundrel with his own child."

It seemed none of them had the courage to jolly the Woman further about being married again. They saw her lips tremble and the paleness of her face. Frank Bedford seemed sorry he spoke of Ronile's father in the Woman's presence and to change the subject he advised a farewell dinner with May Bowl.

"There is a place where we can get some Waldmeister, a wonderful herb, for the punch," and smacking his lips, he called out, "How about it?" and all agreed, so the news of the husband was forgotten by all except Mrs. Delien.

It was a happy party. They drank to the Woman's good luck and courage. One said, "For a better partner, when you get married again," but Mrs. Delien smiled sadly as she was eating the delicious Russian salad for which the hostess was awarded the blue ribbon at a bazaar. She seemed to ignore the answer and complimenting the hostess on her success in having received such a lovely award said it surely was the best she had ever tasted.

"Now here," said Frank, "we are not talking about any blue ribbon; we want to know if that finger there has not a solitaire hidden somewhere, and you are keeping us in the dark."

Frank got up with his glass in his hand, the rest doing likewise, and gave a toast to the hidden treasure, but the Woman had only a large emerald with diamonds around it, also a carat and a half Canary diamond, surrounded by fifteen blue and white, and a small solitaire, but they all

knew she had received that on her birthday. She held up her hands and laughed.

"Well," said Frank, "did you ever hock any?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I want to know if you ever visited 'Uncle,' " and he formed with two hands a ball.

"Oh," she said, "you mean to pawn them? No, not yet. Why I never thought you could do that."

"No, you wouldn't do that," said the other. "I remember the time when we were in Saratoga; we played a lot at Kane Fields and tied a great deal on the horses' tails, and say, she wouldn't part with a ring, to pawn it. She just went home and he had to borrow the means to follow her."

"Well," she said, "if he spent in three weeks what we had planned to spend in enjoying a six weeks' vacation, he would have in another day used up all the rings and lots more, so I thought it was better to go, knowing he would then be out of temptation."

"Now," said Frank, "if you can lead them out of temptation, how many poor fellows need a woman like you, to help them get courage and quit."

"Why can't they quit without relying on some one else?" she asked. "I am not inclined toward reforming men."

"If you loved him you would," said the hostess.

"Yes," replied the Woman, "but I can't love anything with a weakness of habit, and don't intend to ever fall for a mission of that kind."

"Is your heart so broken that you can't love any more?" asked Frank.

"I can't say that," she replied. "There is love that travels, linking up with everything—a universal love."

"Now," said Frank, "you can't have them all."

"No," said the hostess, "not Frank, anyway."

"You do not understand."

"No," said Frank, "your heart is like a prune."

"Well," laughed the Woman, "it keeps better dried up."

Looking at the blue ribbon, Mrs. Delien thought a



"The hours I spend with thee, dear heart, are but a string of pearls to me. I count them over, everyone apart."—*My Rosary.*

while, then she said, "Some day my flowers will bring me one like that, for I love them and as I join each leaf in a loving way they can't help but leave a sweet condition with the purchaser."

The hostess said, "I saw one of your flowers on the hat of a very aristocratic lady, with a smaller one on the lace of her collar."

"Oh," said the flower-maker, as she took the large spray apart, and happily she kept on, "See, they begin to respond to the loving greeting I send them on with."

Mr. Frank Bedford rose, saying, "You can love your flowers, but why did God take the rib out of Adam?" and dramatically recited: "It is not well that you should live alone."

"What about Ronile?" asked the Woman.

"All the more reason, she needs authority as she grows up. You will see that when she stops reading fairy tales. She won't want to confide in you all the time."

"But suppose she does," said the Woman. "We are now very much attached—bound together—by the rope of experience. We have traveled over many obstacles; why should we separate if we agree? Our happiness lies in our peace—peace that means more to me than a man's love and wealth. Now let us talk of something else," she said impatiently, "I don't want to look over myself always. 'Thy Will be Done,' is my motto. It brought me to the last goal, the harmony of soul. I am happy as I am."

"That's right," said Frank. "Now when we go to the country, will you come along, or will you stay in our house and take care of it?"

"Why don't you come?" asked the hostess. "Camping is just what you need for your nerves especially after taking care of Ronile."

"Yes," interrupted Frank, "you could have kissed a goat between the horns, so thin was your face when you arrived. There is a chance for you, make up your mind."

It was midnight when they retired; one of those sultry, hot nights and an east wind was blowing, and in spite of living near Evanston the odor of the stockyards was an

occasional visitor. The Woman thought a long while, weighing carefully the sweet country air of Spider Lake, Wisconsin, and the heavy odor of the stockyards. At last she realized that there was a chance to earn money and it takes time to make the flowers. Thus viewing the situation she came to the conclusion that she would take advantage of her friends' invitation to remain in their home and work. With that resolution she fell asleep, blessing all that were good to her.

At breakfast she told her friends that she would like to remain in their home as she would feel more at ease to work, and she had a big order to finish. She needed the money as she wanted to start a Novelty Shop in New York, so that when the Western buyers came, she could eventually establish a nice business.

They agreed with her, knowing that up to that time she had never borrowed money from her friends. Often they asked her if she needed anything, telling her not to hesitate about asking, for they realized that a woman raising a child must at times face a low financial tide.

"Yes," said the Woman, "when that comes in we cast our eyes upwards to the One who makes the evolution, the sunshine and storm just to purify the air. After the storm subsides there is more magnetism in the air. If I borrowed from my friends the form of debtor would take the place of cordiality, often pushing poor friendship out of existence. See, I prefer the dear good Mrs. Friendship, to the frowning, cruel, heartless Mr. Debt."

"Where do you get that stuff? Putting everything into form?" asked Frank, as he rolled up his napkin and started to light a cigar.

"Why," she replied, "Experience brings them to me."

CHAPTER XV

MY SOUL'S DOMAIN

"When I sit twisting flowers, my soul models these forms and my soul's abode is filled with that kind of statuary. Energy is the superintendent," she smiled. "Caution stands by the gate of the soul's domain. This Caution is a very old man full of mars and wrinkles blaming Experience for his deep furrows. He, however, rejects the blame as Duty marks the daily road sign to lead them on. 'I stand alone against Desire, Adventure, Greed, and must follow from the cradle to the grave,' said Experience. Her gateway is always open; they seek her most in Pleasure and when they come to the gate, the soul's domain, Mr. Caution is not always heeded. Love, for instance, doesn't know him. She flies over the gate, knows no bounds until she meets Disappointment, a fellow with remorseful eyes, and pouting lips. He wanders on with her to sip the sweetness out of the cups of purity, leaving her at times to know him better. He communicates with her through Longing, a gray misty form that turns the sunshine into rain. With Love's garments wet from tears caused by Disappointment, Vengeance urges her to meet Caution who with Experience tries to bring her Patience. But Longing has a stronger hold and leads her to Adventure; there she meets him. A union follows; they assemble in the Festival Hall. Hope appears at times. A short appeal to Faith, however, failed to win Love as she is in the palace of Adventure and meeting Mirth, the wife of Lust. Advised by Adventure they climb the high mountain called Pleasure, stopping at times at the inn of Mr. Brutality and his wife, Intoxication. At sunrise comes Awakening, touching her gently with a golden beam, beckoning, whispering through the birds, flowers and rippling waters. Alas, Brutality is Love's host and he jars Love's sweet sentiment as he introduces Love to his son Destruction. He does not heed her cry to spare the birds and flowers. She weeps tenderly, holding the dying bits of God's creation. Thus

Sympathy holds firm Love's hopeless cry. Mirth and Lust regard not Sympathy. They follow Pleasure, while Love repudiates Brutality and Destruction. She clings to Faith a little while, who tries with Tenderness to bring her back to Caution. Alas, Longing comes with orders from Adventure, to meet Disappointment on top of Mount Pleasure. She runs with Longing from the Inn of Brutality, Intoxication and Destruction, but meets Fear on the threshold—a giant, black form that works in the dark, carrying his missions under cover. He with firm tyrannical hold leads Love and Longing to his wife Forgetfulness into the hut of Darkness. There Sorrow is born to Love. Longing administers, reminding her to forget Disappointment. Faith calls for Dr. Hope and his wife, Charity. They lead Love to Caution. Sorrow is baptized 'Joy' by tears of Remorse, held in a shell of Mother of Pearl, that Experience gathered as they fell from the eyes of weeping Love, looking for Disappointment.

"Faith pours the shining drops on the head of Sorrow. Hope brings him to the Altar of Sacrifice; Charity clothes him in a new garment, made from the light that shines from within.

"Advice, the daughter of Caution, leads Love toward the great Hall of 'Thy Kingdom Come.' Sweet Intention presents Love with lilies with which Love decorates the altar of Sacrifice. With outstretched arms, Joy greets Love as Past removes the former name of Sorrow and the Light from within writes illuminatingly all over Joy."

With outstretched arms, Frank cried, "For heaven's sake, if your soul made all the stuff you just mentioned, then we will adopt Joy," laying his hands on the Woman's shoulder, saying wistfully: "There is no use talking, there is something to it; I wish I could see things the way you do. A mighty fine world you are living in, old girl." Taking out his watch and realizing that he was late, he bid a hasty good-by and rushed to the Argyle Station.

A few days later the friends departed for a month's camping in Wisconsin, remarking as their car purred its way through farms and forests: "Why she looked so happy

and not bitter. Reno is a good place after all; it took all the bitterness out of her."

"Oh, no," said the wife, "not Reno. Experience and faith took it out of her." They kept the Woman as their main topic, still remaining with her Soul's Domain, wondering how they could build their statuary of faith.

"Give up your habit of smoking," said the wife.

"There are sixteen dollars' worth of cigars, a month's supply." He figured up that only four cigars a day (fifty cents), would amount to \$182.50 a year.

"Yes," said the wife, "just think of the poor woman with a tubercular husband and five children living in a basement without a bed; how the neighbors keep them alive. For \$182.50 we could clothe all the children and get a bed for them and here you blow it in the air."

"Ah, but think of the satisfaction of sitting in your easy chair blowing the smoke of a good Havana through your nostrils, gazing after, forming plans as they form ringlets and vanish."

"Vanish," echoed the wife. "You said it, Frank dear; there is a dried leaf rolled up and sold for lots of money and smoked into ringlets to vanish."

"But it keeps lots of people in employment."

"And puts lots of nails into their coffins," answered the wife. "If they would plant food instead of tobacco there would be other means of making a healthier living for those employed."

"Yes," said Frank, "that's right. A pasture for goats would be even better; it would mean milk for the children."

Thus it happened that Frank smoked just half the usual amount, telling his wife of the plan to get those kiddies some shoes when they went back, which they did. So with vibrating, good thoughts of harboring charity, the clean fresh air and God's good sunshine brought a happy family closer to the gates of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI

WITH FATE ALONE

The Woman sat from morning until night by the window, working untiringly on the silk flowers as if she wanted to rival Nature herself. The orders were turned in at the promised time. Ronile played with her little friend Karl and many times the Woman laughed at the sturdy little fellow as he played Percy, the mechanical man. Ronile would touch the button and Percy would perform all kinds of tasks with great patience. "If he had to stand in that position, as I behold him now, for at least ten minutes for punishment or force he would deem it torture. It evidently shows," thought the Woman, "that patience thrives better in the mellow soil of freedom than on a rock of compulsion."

Karl's mother, a dear good woman, helped her friend make leaves and applied at every store in the neighborhood for boxes to pack the flowers in. She marveled about California, hoping that some day they could live there.

Without looking up the Woman said, "You will." Karl's mother jumped in delight, almost upsetting all the small lots of wires and ribbons she held in the box cover on her lap.

"Do you think so?" she cried.

"Why not?" said the Woman, "if your wish is centered there. A magnet must draw that desire from you."

"If you say so, I know we will," replied Karl's mother, "for whatever you said before came true, and we often remarked how you knew things, and how easy it is for you to make up your mind and go."

"Well," said the Woman, "most people are afraid to advance for fear. I go in good faith; it awaits me at every station. Fear, I do not know."

"But," said her friend, "don't you fear God?"

"No," replied the Woman, "I love Him too much. Perhaps if I loved Him less I would fear Him, but knowing

Him in His mercy of being nearest when need is greatest I cannot help but just devotedly love Him without fear."

"But the Bible says to fear God," the friend interposed.

"It is true," said the Woman, "but I follow Christ's teachings to love one another. Just look at the seventeenth chapter in the Evangelium of John, when Christ said, 'I am one with Thee, oh Father, and Thou art One with Me; may they be one with Us. That all the world will know that Thou hast sent me forth to do Thy will and that Thou lovest them as Thou hast ever loved me. Thy word is truth, oh God, and by thy word let them be sanctified.' How, then, can we feel anything but divine love and devotion for such a glorious appeal from the Son to the Father for us? In those words we feel a hold so strong—just love, and no fear," she concluded.

A ring from the back door bell interrupted the sacred argument. The friend examining the box the expressman brought clasped her hands in delight, and cried, "Fish from Spider Lake!" It resulted that the two families joined in a delicious fish dinner, blessing that bunch up there in Wisconsin.

Two weeks later Mrs. Delien finished, planning to take the steamer over the Great Lakes to Buffalo. She set the house in perfect order, blessing each room, and they left on Saturday saying it would be better to be out before the folks came back thus avoiding confusion, and so as not to overstep the generosity of their good friends.

As they went on board the boat Ronile was presented with a large basket of fruit from one of the uncles, as it was her habit to address all male and female friends as aunty and uncle. They waved joyously as the boat glided through the clear water. A cool wind swept over the tired form of the Woman and knowing Ronile could not get lost on the ship she was about the first to go to her berth to relax both in mind and body. They stayed on board as the boat landed at Detroit, but went ashore at Mackinac Island, where the mother purchased Ronile a small Indian doll. They arrived at Buffalo early in the morning. The Woman first checked her baggage and purchased her tick-

ets to New York. Then they took a car to Niagara Falls and enjoyed a wonderful day.

In the evening they took the train to New York. At the first breakfast call they were ready to partake and when the train passed New Rochelle they sat with eager eyes watching the familiar scenery. A presentiment seemed to manifest itself to the Woman, for she took all her valuables and tucked them carefully into her bag, regretting at times that she had come back east.

It was very hot when they arrived on Forty-second Street. The city was smoky and uninviting but she did not tarry with the vague feeling that seemed to worry her. She banished the thought and with determined step she walked along Lexington Avenue to rent a modern parlor floor for her intended Novelty Shop.

They took a small temporary apartment on the ground floor, and Ronile sighed and said, "There are no birds singing in this place, and no trees, or flowers." Her mother told her that in a few days they would get a better home with at least a tree in the back yard. Then they looked for Hannah, leaving their address with the house-keeper, who informed them that Hannah was out with a gentleman friend. Holding Ronile by the hand, the Woman looked at many For Rent and To Let signs, and finally after climbing many stairs she found a suitable place. She then took her savings and went to purchase the furniture. Alas, Ronile became very tired and lifting up her foot she showed her mother how it hurt and indeed there was a blister on the heel. If Hannah was home she could leave Ronile with her but now she must take her home and finish tomorrow, she thought.

They ate a simple supper, then she bathed Ronile and put her to bed. They prayed ardently. A weakness seemed to overcome the Woman. She thought of Hannah and her friend as she sat by the bed still holding the hand of the sleeping child as if she needed support. Her thoughts wandered to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Christ had prayed and begged His disciples to watch just a little while with Him.

"Oh, my Father," she prayed, "why should I enter

into Gethsemane? Have I not finished the cup of bitterness?" Her chest began to heave; drops were standing on her forehead. With shaky fingers she loosened her garments, and kneeling before the bed she rested her head on her clenched fingers, calling out for her daily bread, and not to be led into temptation and to be delivered from evil. Thus putting soul and body into the hands of the Father she went to bed and soon she slept peacefully with her savings under her pillow.

It was rather late in the morning when they were awakened by a baby carriage being wheeled down three flights of stairs. They had to look around getting accustomed to the dingy quarters and, recollecting her task of a busy day, the Woman quickly jumped out of bed.

Ronile followed suit and as she buttoned her Mary Jane slipper she said. "Why doesn't Hannah come, mother dear?"

With a sad look on her face the mother said: "If we think strongly enough, dear, she must come as we have up to now been the giver. She is our debtor if in nothing else but gratitude. I need her now," she continued as she loosened the shoe and sock again looking at Ronile's heel. It was a large spot where the skin had come off in the bath. She took some salve and a piece of cotton, put it gently over the heel and then slipped the sock on and Ronile agreed that if Hannah did not come she would go with her mother, to see the tree in the back yard.

Then she cried, "Maybe there will be sunshine and then I will take my shoe off and let the sun make a new skin over my heel."

With stern eyes and set face the Woman silently went about her task. She counted her money (eight hundred dollars), then took the locket from Ronile and the bracelet she always wore and put all in a bag. Eagerly the child pulled out the bracelet and slipped it over her hand, begging her mother to let her wear it.

"But you are too small, yet, dear, you may lose it; you know I am so worried about these things and it would seem terrible to lose this," she continued rather painfully.

"Yes," said Ronile, "if we lost it then we would lose

our luck." She fondled the little hearts that jingled around the gold band. Each was engraved with the name of the giver; at the end was a small cross on which was written in tiny letters: "May your cross of life never be heavier than this."

Turning it she said: "Mother, when did grandma give you this, and the little hearts?"

"Oh," sighed the Woman, "on my sixteenth birthday. Don't you remember? I have told you so often."

"Yes, mother dear, but the more you tell me the older I am and when I am sixteen you will give it to me, won't you?"

"Yes," said the mother, "you may have it as I am feeling now the jar of those little hearts as they jingle on my arms. Besides, it is better in this neighborhood not to show any jewelry," and thus speaking she placed the rings in the corner of a chamois bag, tucked it in and laid everything on the table.

They went into the bathroom to wash up when Ronile cried, "Oh, here comes Hannah!" They listened and not being dressed the Woman opened the door and rushed to the bathroom. Ronile hurried and soon came back ready to jump into Hannah's arms, but no one was there. Running to her mother Ronile cried, "Why, mother, there is no one here!" The Woman went to the door; it was wide open and coming back, she looked around calling, "Hannah, come on, we are in a hurry, no fooling now!" Ronile looked up at her mother anxiously, as the latter slowly and with piercing glance looked over the room. Her eyes rested on the empty table; the purse was gone.

In a husky voice she asked, "Did you take the bag from the table, Ronile?"

"No, mother, I did not see it. You put it on the table when we went to the bathroom."

The Woman dropped into a chair, folding her arms tightly about her, as if she had to keep something together, body, faith, hope. "Oh, God," she cried. "Not that, not that; only You know how hard it was to earn it."

Ronile fell on her knees imploring her mother: "Why did you not let me have the bracelet? Now it is gone."

She sobbed as she touched her neck and cried, "My locket, too, and the ring with the little diamond, the Forget-Me-Not ring, with the blue stones around the little diamond."

Suddenly the Woman arose to her feet like a shot, throwing out her arms, holding them apart, and calling out: "My crucifixion—lead me to it." Came the cry from a dying soul, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" A bitterness seemed to possess the tortured victim, and she ran out the door up the street toward Third Avenue. Coming out of the side entrance of a saloon she beheld a policeman. Approaching him she stammered out her loss. He told her to report at once to the Thirty-fifth Street Station. She ran without a hat, forgetting poor little Ronile, who stood on the corner crying as much for the locket and bracelet as for her mother. The policeman talked kindly to her, holding her hand and getting further particulars from the anxious heart-tested young soul.

"Where is your father?" he asked.

"Dead and worse."

"What do you mean by worse when he is dead?"

"Well," said the child, "if he were dead he could help us now, but he is worse," she cried, her little frame shaking with sobs. Looking up at the sturdy Irishman, she quieted, forgetting her sobs for a minute. "Are you a daddy?"

"I sure am," he said, straightening up, "and please God, I hope I'll never be a worse one, rather dead. Sure, who could leave a nice little girl like you?"

"Well," she said, "they all do. Hannah, too, has left us now."

In the meantime Mrs. Delien, breathless, entered the police station, and telling the sergeant of her loss he noted down particulars, then looking at her in an unsympathetic way he said gruffly, "What made you keep all that money and jewelry with you in a place like this?"

"Well," said the Woman, "I needed it today," pointing a few blocks down in the direction of the shop she intended to open that day for which she had paid the rent the day before.

Trying to console her, he said: "There are a lot of

Greeks living around here and ye want to be careful. There is the post-office, why didn't ye put it there?" The Woman recalled a Postal Money Order for a hundred and thirty-five dollars, and she told the sergeant about it. He said: "That's safe at least. Go right over and tell them. Perhaps we'll land them with that."

After giving the post-office authorities an account of her loss, she was told it would take a little time, and then realizing her hopelessness she stretched out her arms again like on the cross and said, "I have not a penny left," and the gentleman assured her of attending to it at once. She went back crossing Third Avenue. The elevated road above and the noise of the traffic on the cobblestones seemed too much for the Woman and she swayed as she crossed. A pedestrian saw her fall and grabbed her just in time, saving her from the wheels of a car. He led her toward the corner where Ronile came running anxiously, supporting the staggering form, taking long steps to keep up the gait. The gentleman was a detective who had followed the Woman looking for a clue. He asked her where the place was that she had rented. The address was in the stolen purse.

Then he asked her if she would recognize it if she saw it, but the woman was dazed, her eyes were far away and she did not answer. "You'd better lie down; I'll be back in a little while; you will feel better. In the meantime, we may get the thief on the money order."

Two hours had elapsed when he returned. The Woman sat in the same position. Ronile was eating an orange out of the basket of fruit from Chicago. When the detective returned he asked if they had had breakfast and Ronile shook her head in a meaning way that they and breakfast did not belong together.

"We have no money," she said. He turned to the Woman and asked if she had paid anything on the rent.

"Yes, one month," she said.

"Well," he proceeded, "that's fine, we will get that at once. Come, kiddie, get your mother's hat. We'll get some money."

Ronile got the hat and slipping the elastic of her own

hat under her chin she stood ready to go. Taking her mother by the arm, she helped her. Then they walked along Lexington Avenue, toward their intended future home. On the corner of 43rd Street Ronile stopped and looking past the rear of the houses she cried, "There it is with the trees in the back yard!" A moment later the three climbed the steps to get back the one month's rent of their intended future home. The detective suggested they had better eat something, and pointing to Ronile he said: "A nice little kiddie like that needs you. No use giving up. We may land them tonight yet."

The Woman had a lump in her throat; she felt that no food would go down. There was an empty feeling; a barren existence; some cruel hand had pulled out all the plants that surrounded her; those sprouts called deeds. Giving her encouragement each day they made sunshine linger longer and held in their tiny cups the tears she wept when sorrow came to visit.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE ROAD OF GOOD DEEDS

"Faith in fate," she thought. "Oh, cruel companion, Mr. Fate, you are the only one that directs our lives now for faith has left me." Ronile went to the door with the detective, then she timidly asked her mother for something to eat. Mechanically the Woman opened the handkerchief she held with the money rolled in it. She told Ronile to get what she wanted at the store. A minute later, a little figure was running across the street, her little handkerchief tied around the silver coin.

She looked around suspiciously as if in fear of having someone take it from her. Entering the store, she just glanced around, then going to the clerk she held up the coin, saying, "What can I get for this?"

"Well," said the grocer, "what do you want?"

"Oh, I want so many things. My mother needs ever so many," and looking sadly down at the fifty-cent piece she realized that not much could be gotten, so she asked for a bottle of milk and a box of crackers.

After the storekeeper gave her back the change, she sized it up and jumped saying as she went out: "Oh, goody! I have lots of money left."

As she entered the room she wanted to hand the change to her mother, but seeing her resting her head on the table she laid it carefully beside her and went to eat some crackers and milk. After a long time she thought, "Mother must eat something," and poured out a glass for her, but there was no response. She sighed and sipped a little herself, then put it away. With her hands clasped, her little feet crossed, she sat a long time watching the crushed form before her, wondering why Hannah did not come, looking at the door, trying to think strongly, bending her head forward and setting her jaws firmly, but no Hannah came.

She touched her mother gently, stealing her arm around the form, saying: "Dear, don't be so still! I don't want the

bracelet any more!" No response, not even a breath. She wanted to open the trunk that had arrived in the meantime but the key was in the stolen bag. She sat down, crossing her little arms over her chest, trying to think out a way to get a key. She wanted to go to the corner and ask the big policeman who wanted to be dead rather than worse, but looking at her mother she felt it unwise to leave her.

Then she took the fruit basket; there she had a pencil and pad the uncle in Chicago gave her as he handed her the basket, to write him a letter. She knew without a stamp and envelope it would not reach him, so she thought of everybody but they all needed a stamp. With a lost expression, she gazed out of the window into a gray yard. There were no stars, or sun or moon to appeal to. She thought: "How can I reach God? Mother says He is everywhere, but I don't know if He would like to live here where the birds don't sing. But everywhere is here, too," she philosophized. "I will just write Him a letter; if everybody has left us, maybe He won't."

She recalled her mother's answer to her remark at Christmas time: "Why did not God put Jesus in a nice bed, when He owns everything, instead of a manger and stable?" She wished that God would put her in a stable now, there are at least animals that will lick your hand, and holding her palm up she stared at it sadly. Then she looked around the room again recalling the mother's answer that God dwells more in humble quarters than in palaces, otherwise He would not have sent His beloved Son to a stable. She recalled a remark from one owner as they looked for a room saying the neighborhood was now a regular Jerusalem, and clasping her hands in joy she thought, "Well, Christ was crucified in Jerusalem, and mother, too, said, 'My crucifixion!' Oh, then God is near," she said, "for He was with Christ when He died, and an angel brought Him the cup to drink from. Oh, dear angels, please bring my mother a cup of something to let her speak to me!" Big tears were rolling down her pale cheeks as she sat alone, appealing for help.

She took the pencil and wrote many little notes. On one she wrote, "Dear God, please come in," and wetting the

note with her tongue, she pasted it on the door. On another she drew a little bunch of forget-me-nots, then a little girl sitting on a chair. Underneath she wrote, "Dear angels, forget me not," which she pasted on the window. Then she drew her mother lying with her head on the table; above it she made an eye and underneath she wrote, "Dear Jesus, maybe my mother has no cross but she got crucified, too; she fell under it; does the eye of God see her?" That she laid on the table. Then she waited a while for some Angel or Jesus, perhaps God Himself, to come. It was very warm and poor Ronile became drowsy waiting for an answer to her letters. She lay down on the bed and fell asleep.

After the mother had given Ronile the money, she hopelessly laid her head on the table in despair. She felt a swaying so gentle it lifted her up. Before her stood a man with a long white robe and beard. There were many forms attending to his direction. Lining up on both sides each had a banner across his chest with a picture, the Woman recalled, of familiar scenes. She asked, as she ascended, "What does this mean?" The angels sang, "Adeste Fideles."

She beheld one angel whose banner showed the deed of equality, another the deed of patience. Then one approached with a glittering garment made of tears; each seemed as he drew nearer to grow larger like a crystal. It was indeed a review of deeds that this great form of sorrow, turned to joy, exhibited. Every kind deed the Woman ever performed became manifest in that garment of crystal. Another had a light around his head. The rays formed golden letters, shooting out through the universe. As the letters passed her eyes the Woman read: "Good thought is a purifying element that crystallizes the cloudy depressing atmosphere. It removes the spider-web of lies from the eyes of your opponents, breaks the briars and thorns bad intention has planted; will remove the tight, clinging hands of selfishness, thus finding the spirit of the souls and will leave a kernel to sprout for eventual upliftment." She beheld the uncountable forms, each lining up, making a wonderful road leading into endless space.



"They were the happy times in Reno, when Pansy Wilton would give Ronile her pet. Often they would take a trip to the desert."—Page 38.

The further they came the more glorious it looked. Her journey sometimes came to a standstill; she felt drawn and slipped back at times. A look from the eyes of her escorts would draw her up again. She asked the great spirit beside her to explain why she always slipped. He turned her around and she beheld the great road that led to herself in flesh by the table. She saw Ronile shaking her body in flesh, thus making her soul slip. There was nothing spoken; they seemed to talk through their eyes and noticing a look of understanding among all, she beheld a beautiful form with a garment part white, blue, pink and gold. As she came closer the garment consisted of forget-me-nots. They formed into eyes, then little children's faces, beaming with joy. It was mercy who was descending to the room and gently picked up Ronile and put her to bed. Remaining by the bedside, she stroked the child's head, as the Woman drawn magnetically, turned back to proceed on the journey. They came to a great hall. Its pillars were like alabaster. She beheld the Scripture above reading, "Hope, Thy Kingdom Come."

They placed her in a wonderful chair made in the form of a shell. It was made from Mother of Pearl, originally tears, but hardened into an eternal seat. In her happiness she tried to touch the arms but they seemed transparent. She clasped her hands but they went through each other. There was not a care. Inexpressible joy prevailed over her as she sat in the chair on a platform of sacrifice. That platform had many steps; she again beheld her form far away lying on the table. Alas, there came a feeling like a breath that drew her back. She beheld two wings, part flesh and part spirit, moving slowly.

"My lungs," she thought. A slow tap, like a beat making her descend a step lower with each throbbing call of the heart. The call was sudden; she had no time to say farewell and to thank those great guides who showed her the road of good deeds. What a contrast it was as she felt the heavy weight of the tired body! She lifted up her head and looked around. Before her lay the letter to Jesus with the eye above. She read the line and smiled

sacredly, then once more tried to make the trip by way of recollection.

She stood up, raising her arms above her head, palms upward, saying in a vibrating, sacred tone: "I will be Thy water-bearer, Great Host of all the universe. Thou hast given me the strength to carry Thy lost sheep back to the fold. Oh, Great King, Master in Mercy, I grieve not for the gold after beholding 'Thy Kingdom Come.' All the precious stones on this earth cannot form the size of the key to fit that jewel gate of hope! From now on I will decorate myself with the light of thy stars and the gold of thy sun, the silver of thy moon. I will spend my time in seeking thy lost children, to bring them nearer to Thee. Oh, Father, let me humbly serve at the fountain of despair to meet those looking for strength."

Going toward the window she looked up; no sky was visible; a gray wall met her gaze. Yet there was a note pasted there, with an appeal to the angels and forget-me-nots. No wonder Mercy was by the bedside. Thus going toward the sleeping child she kissed her tenderly.

Ronile woke up, and seeing her mother smiling she threw her arms about the changed form and cried in glee: "Oh, mama dear! I am so glad God answered my letter. See! I put His eye on the note and that is why He saw it, and brought you back to me, mother. Oh," she went on, "I had a dream. Grandma was here," and smacking her lips she seemed to still relish the goodies the fairies had given her in the dream. "Mother," she said, "I had the cutest little golden cup, but I could not feel it. I—I," stammered the child, "asked the angels to bring you a cup of something and they brought me some, too. Oh, and the cookies! I had such wonderful ones with nuts on them. Mother, if ever we have a stove with an oven, I am going to put a note on the window for the fairy baker to give you the recipe."

"Yes, dear," said the mother, "we are well provided for God is everywhere; we never felt Him closer than now."

To herself she said, "And I had accused Him of forgetting me. What a wonderful sensation to leave the body and travel that road of good deeds, lined up with the

thankful faces. That is the wealth that shines through the eyes and the good on earth will know my sign of good intention at all times. Oh, Divine Father, Thou hast shown me my station as a transmitter between heaven and earth and I pledge myself faithful to serve at that altar of good deeds and will lead your breath in to hungry souls. Thou hast released me of the last bit of selfishness, therefore, I am Thy servant; Thy bidding shall be my pleasure not command, for Thou dost not command in Thy great mercy. Free will was installed in our being but, oh, Lord, we forget the One that gave us all. For our weakness we blame Thee, oh, Father. For every error we commit in selfishness we reproach Thee. If Thou relievest a sufferer and callest him home to the land of Thy Kingdom, 'Spirit repose,' we weep and call Thee unjust; just because Thou knowest best and lovest best in relieving pain and sorrow. We kill the birds that praise Thee and break the flowers that grace Thee, and kill Thy children that serve Thee.

"With all that on our record staring in our face at all times, we blindly go to Thine house, to commune with Thee, exhibiting a devoted countenance and a black heart. Let me be one that knows Thy power, to know the meaning of the thunder and lightning as well as sunshine, rain and dew. Let me in truth abide; my crucifixion through selfishness is overcome. Thy force is omnipotent. Oh, God, Thy will is great. If I can be one with Thee, my Father, Thy breath will rest within my flesh. Then I can find the strength to help mankind and certainly they with me will reach the deific life. All must in time come back to Thee. As the rain forms into mist it rises and returns again in single dewdrops through Thy mighty law as one developing into the other.

"Each one must find a way that leads to redemption. The masses do not heed the lesson of Thy Son, our Master, but they know Him everywhere. He manipulates through every channel, directing from the River of Life. They are aware of His presence. Alas, they too are sure of His mercy and regard Him not as He stands at the door and knocks! Let us have faith in one another to become more

perfect in helping each other, for whatever we have done amiss we must perform again and again till all selfishness is overcome.

“There is no darkness where truth prevails. At night Thy stars gleam through the darkness. Thou knowest best to give the body rest, while the soul proceeds to explore and serve and then returns with encouragement and we call that dreaming. If through abuse we cripple that great mechanism of nerve and blood fuse we regard not Thy law of nature but take to the artificial stimulant that sets a spark for a little while, only to give it a more deadly blow in the event and render us to darker surroundings.

“Thy love is so great it manifests itself the same through every being regardless of color or creed. I know Thou wilt not give us a stone when we ask for bread, therefore I will put myself in Thy care. Lead Thou me on—”

CHAPTER XVIII

ON WITH THE LIGHT THAT SHINES FOR TOMORROW

It was indeed a holy hour and Ronile sat listening intently to every word her mother spoke, her hands clasped. However, she was glad when her mother was through. A desire for fresh air seemed to manifest itself strongly in Ronile. She begged her mother to take her out. Twenty-four hours had passed since the Woman ate her last meal and she began to feel a strong desire for food. They went to a restaurant and ate heartily. She saw the blue rings around Ronile's eyes and realized that we cannot live without food and she begged Ronile to eat. Looking quite happy they found a locksmith who fitted the necessary keys; then the Woman told Ronile of the picnic, the next day, at Kenwood, New Jersey. She knew it would take perhaps a week to get the money from the post-office.

"But, mother!" said Ronile, "suppose the detective comes with the bag?" And the mother smiled sadly, shaking her head.

"I am afraid we shall never see it again, as I feel it beyond my reach. In fact it seems a long ways from here now and we have no money to follow. But," she said, "we are going to the country where you will see Hazel and Ethel."

"And perhaps, old Victor, our dog, which we gave the gardener!" cried Ronile in delight.

That night they slept better than they had for a long time; a sense of relief seemed to possess the Woman as she thought of Hannah. Many nights she had lain awake worrying about the girl—just a weed that would not bear good fruit no matter where she was transplanted. She cuddled closer to Ronile and clasping their hands in each other they slept sweetly and soundly.

They awoke early; not noticing the dark wall. They were out almost with the sunrise, had some breakfast and then went to the elevated station. It was cool as they rode down Third Avenue. Ronile eagerly watched the sights.

At times she forgot the men on the train and cried out: "Oh, mother, look, there's a baby asleep on the fire escape. Poor baby, I wish I could take you to Kenwood to see the green lawns, the trees and the flowers." At the Battery they took the boat to Staten Island. "It was cheaper," thought the Woman. There they took the car to the little ferry taking them to Elizabethport. Ronile did not mind the continuous change of cars and after a long ride they arrived at Kenwood. No one knew that they had returned and there were many surprised faces as they saw Ronile and her mother on the car. There was Ebenezer, the conductor, still on the job. He marveled at Ronile's size, smiling all over as he told her how a few years ago he had tried to buy her dogs, and gave her two cents; how she agreed on the price and after she had gone a block with the money called the dogs, and running back full speed returned the two cents. "Them was the happy times, all right," he went on, as the car was coming to their destination.

The Woman's dear old friend, Mrs. Hilbert, was sweeping the front steps as they walked along. She steadied her glasses as if she wanted to see more clearly. There was not much time to ponder, for a minute later tears were running down the cheeks of both women. The good friend wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron and leading the Woman up the steps she reproached her for not letting her know she was coming.

"Well," said Mrs. Delien, "a sad occurrence arranged matters so quickly that we decided at the last minute to come." It was getting quite warm so they sat in the cool living room with a gentle breeze blowing past the Woman that thrilled her like a "dear one welcoming her home," she said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Hilbert, "we certainly missed you," and getting up she exclaimed, "You must be hungry." A minute later a noise was heard coming from the chicken house, and coming back she held some fresh eggs in her hand, which she prepared in a motherly way. She called for Ruth, the daughter, to get a fresh glass of jelly out of the cellar.

"Oh, for what?" came the answer from the upper floor. "There is some down there."

"Well," said Mrs. Hilbert, "just come down and see whom I want it for." Ruth grumbled about the darn old beggars, and that she could never stay at anything, but when she beheld the Woman who had taught her the first stitch of embroidery, she stopped short, her mouth wide open, more petrified than anything else. Ronile ran over and hugged her, they kissed her numbness away and Ruth was flying down the cellar steps bringing even dill pickles in spite of the early morning hour.

"My," said Mrs. Hilbert, "what a good thing you came. In another day I would be in Pennsylvania visiting the folks."

"Yes," said Ruth, "just think, they are going to leave me here all alone, all on account of the darned old chickens and miserable old garden."

"Ruth dear," said the Woman, as she accepted her plate with crisp bacon and a lovely fried egg on it, "if I could take care of a garden and the dear chickens that give you these lovely eggs, I would be the happiest woman on earth."

"What!" said Ruth. "When I look at the cards you sent me from California, with the Golden Gate Park and all, why I get so mad at mother for not letting me go out into the world."

"But, my dear," interrupted the Woman, "you are too young to understand. Try to keep your feet under your mother's table as long as you can."

Then the Woman told in a condensed way of the robbery.

"Oh, the mean thing!" cried Ruth. "If I ever get my hands on that Hannah I'll snatch her baldheaded. To think of your bringing her all that way and now see. If you had taken me I sure would stick around as long as you wanted me."

"Oh, keep still," interrupted Mrs. Hilbert, and turning to the Woman she looked worried and sad, saying, "Will your troubles ever end?"

"Yes," said the Woman, with a sad expression, "they

are ended." Holding up her empty hands she continued, "There is nothing left to worry about."

"Well," echoed Ruth, "Mrs. Job, stay with us. Oh, gee, ma, I wouldn't want to go to Pennsylvania if that poor Job would stay with me."

A light came into Mrs. Hilbert's eyes and looking beseechingly at the Woman, she said: "Yes, that's a good idea. Stay here and rest while I am away; then I will feel at ease," and pointing to Ruth, she said: "I could not feel quite easy, knowing that she was loose; she is getting wilder every day, as she grows older. Just look, there is hardly any more hair on her head; all singed off. She is a fussing all day on that little wig of hers."

"Well," sneered Ruth, "I can't help it, that I haven't a horse's tail instead of a wig!"

"Oh, keep quiet," said the mother. "It surely would do Ruth good to have some one around that is gentle."

"All right, ma, I'll make a good Aunt Polly some day."

The Woman laughed heartily. It was quite a contrast, this harmless argument, to the grim face of the outside world. Ronile looked lovingly at Mrs. Hilbert as she ate the jelly the good hostess put on her plate. The poor child was overcome with gratitude. She kissed the hand of the dear woman as it passed her face to give her more.

Mrs. Hilbert's heart went out to the poor little girl from that cruel, big, wide world, and laying her hand on Ronile's shoulder, she returned the kiss, even on the jelly mouth, and remarked to Ruth, "See how Ronile appreciates even a little jelly; it wouldn't hurt you to get a taste of the outside world, you wouldn't get so fresh."

"Well, ma," replied Ruth, "I will be your little poodle for a while yet, and if it makes you happy if I kiss your hand for something, why I'll (here she kissed the palm of her hand and blew it over to her mother) kiss you all day long."

"Oh, stop your nonsense," said the mother half amused. "There is no cure for the like o' her," she went on.

"Well," said the Woman, "I am mighty glad Ruth

is just as she is, otherwise she would not be natural. The world needs these types more than any other," she continued. "They are the spice of life." She took Ruth into her arms and kissed her healthy red cheeks on each side. This was a sign of devotion from the Woman.

Ronile remarked, "Ruth, if mother kisses you like that she loves you; I know, for when I am very good she does it to me. And when I am really, truly good she kisses me four times."

"Oh!" cried Ruth, "that's a meal, four times."

"No," said Ronile, "that is happiness. I feel good after four kisses. One on the forehead means a blessing, one on each cheek means attention on all sides, one on the chin means love."

Ruth pulled in her lips tight, frowned a little, then blurted out: "But where does the mouth come in? I thought love meant a kiss on the mouth!"

"It is not healthy," interrupted the Woman.

"Well," said Ruth, mischievously, "you don't believe in mixing the breeds."

"What breeds?" asked the Woman, amused.

"Germs," answered Ruth emphatically.

"Exactly, one must be careful."

"Now," said Ruth, teasingly, "do you mean to tell me that you never kissed him (meaning Ronile's father, then pointing to her mouth) on the—?" She saw the Woman turn pale; her good little heart was sorry that she had made such a thoughtless remark, yet a very sore spot was touched with her friend.

Quick-witted, as she was, it was not hard for her to change the subject, so she grabbed the Woman around the neck and said lovingly, "Slap me on the mouth."

"Yes," said Mrs. Hilbert, "that loose tongue of hers needs slapping; she never thinks of what she says."

"Well," said Ruth, "the feller that'll make love to me will have to rub noses to show his affection, if kissing is dangerous."

"His eyes will tell you, Ruth dear. Cupid is a stubborn little fellow; he finds his way to impress his sincerity at all times."

There was a rattle of wheels outside; Ronile begged permission to leave. Then running to the bay window and looking out, she cried, "Oh, there is Austin; he has a wheelbarrow and a soap-box wagon." She looked beseechingly at her mother, who seemed to understand her desire. The Woman looked out and greeted Austin, and told Ronile to join him. Ronile tried to shake hands with her childhood companion. He, however, had no time to shake hands, there was too much to demonstrate. He turned somersaults; then ran the wheelbarrow into his auto-car, as he called it, breaking off the fly-wheel in the front that he had patiently made out of a cigar box. Ronile stood watching, her hands clasped behind her. She became alarmed as he in his excitement broke some of his self-manufactured toys. There was a tent all painted up with Indian emblems. A big chief was at the front.

Austin told Ronile all the particulars, but sighed, "Ma wouldn't buy me an Indian suit, an' how can we play if we don't look like 'em?"

"Well," said Ronile, "I always pray and God gives me just what I need." Grabbing him by the arm she told in a wistful way that if both prayed God surely would hear. She sized up the tent, then an idea came to her. Making Austin her confidant, she advised him to paint the eye of God on it.

"How can I?" pouted Austin. "I never saw Him, nor even His eye."

Ronile raised herself on her tiptoes, then she stretched out her arms saying, "Why, He is everywhere and if we paint His eye He must look, for He can't help seeing His own eye." She made a form of a triangle with her hands and put it over her mouth. "See, like that," she said.

He gave her a piece of charcoal, and Ronile made the shape of the eye, then asked him for a piece of chalk, which he gave her. It seemed easy to Ronile, for in a few strokes she had made quite a good-shaped eye.

"See, it's easy," she said.

"Oh, gee!" said Austin, "that's all right for a girl, but you couldn't make a wheel like that one," pointing to the discarded wheel that once belonged to his baby buggy.

"Well," said Ronile, ignoring his remark, "we want some Indian suits and I know God will help us get them." She gave the eye on the tent another look; then gazed up at the sky smiling familiarly as if she knew God's grace upon her. Then Austin helped her into the soap-box automobile, with an old piece of tin around the front covering the engine. An old coat hanger was fastened across with a large nail to give it room to move. On each end of the hanger was a piece of rope to steer her, as he described the different parts to his guest. "Now when you turn this way you pull this rope," he went on.

"I know," said Ronile, "I used to ride Jill, the little horse, that belonged to Pansy Wilton in Reno, and you just had to do the same."

This was a novelty in sport for Ronile. She, however, realized it was not a very ladylike thing to do, so she told Austin she would rather keep house, and let him do the riding.

The Woman watched them, seemingly as happy as they were. She too looked up to get a response.

"If I only had the money I would buy them suits," she sighed as she walked out on the porch. Mr. Hilbert was just coming home; both hands outstretched to greet her.

"Well, well," he said, "if we didn't talk about you a half an hour ago. You remember when we built the little town hall and were short of funds, you gave us one hundred dollars, without asking any interest."

"Oh," said the Woman, "I never thought of that, for I don't know what I did with the receipt."

"Well," said Mr. Hilbert, "we are all paid up but you, and we wondered where to find you. You see you left us so quickly that time and I did not want to mention it to— (pointing down to a familiar place, but never mentioning a name). I got the money," he said, "and was going to bring it to the bank for you."

The Woman sighed in a relieved way, saying, "How wonderful, Mr. Hilbert, I do need it badly for I was robbed of eight hundred dollars and all my jewelry." Mr. Hilbert was just going up the steps but stopped short as

the Woman told him of the theft. He rested his hand on his knee as if to support himself.

He thought a while, then asked kindly, "Got any clue?" Mrs. Delien shook her head sadly.

"Well," said her friend, "don't be afraid, little woman, to ask, for what's ours is yours. Welcome to everything, eh, ma?" He put his hat on the rack, then sat on the porch, getting more details of the robbery.

Cheerfully the Woman said, "On the whole, Mr. Hilbert, if I had the money you would perhaps not have seen us for some time, as I just wanted to start a shop. That would have kept me busy. And Ronile needs this wonderful air after the smallpox."

"You are right," he said, "all things happen for the best." Then he pulled out his wallet and gave her one hundred and twenty-five dollars."

"But," said the Woman, as she counted the sum, "you give me too much."

"No," said he, "only five per cent interest makes twenty-five dollars in five years."

"Is it that long?" asked the Woman.

"Why sure, look at the building now; it needs a coat of paint again badly," Mr. Hilbert replied.

"I hear you are Mayor here now; I congratulate you."

"Never mind about myself," said the good man. "I want to know all about you." And he went on, "To think we are going to Pennsylvania in the morning."

"We will have plenty of time to talk," said Mrs. Delien, "but having this money I would like to return to the city and get some necessary articles."

"Well, have your trunk sent out here for the summer, then ma can take a long vacation," said Mr. Hilbert.

"I will," replied the Woman, a warm feeling rising to her throat, as she gratefully looked at her friends, and said, "God surely arranges all things to a wonderful advantage. A home!" she said, looking around admiringly, caressing with a loving glance the well-kept grounds and the clean house, with no servants, but oh, such wonderful people. She clasped her hands in silent prayer, as she went to get her hat to go back to the city.

Ronile remained, having a splendid time with Austin. How she enjoyed the big piece of bread and jelly on the back porch, with her little chum, he trying to take a deep bite so the jelly would leave a rim around his mouth—"a mustache," he called it. Mr. Hilbert was trying out his car for the trip through the mountains, so he suggested taking the Woman, thus making the trip easy for her, to transfer her luggage.

Just as Mrs. Hilbert was setting the table for supper, they tooted up the street, the children standing on both sides of the running board. They carried the heavy satchels, but Ronile spied a large box containing something she had never seen, she thought, and looking at her mother, she begged to carry the box in. Austin, too, had a presentiment for he looked at Ronile with an expectant expression, as they hurriedly brought it in. The Woman said they might open the box. One could see the pulse beat on Austin's throat from excitement.

"Chee," he said, "if it was the Indian suit, I'd jump," and he did. The chief's headgear was on the top. He put it on, jumping and crying like an Indian. Ronile took the other, then both ran upstairs and pretty soon came back introducing themselves as Minnehaha and Hiawatha. A war dance followed, that looked more like the jungle, Ruth claimed.

"Children must have freedom," said Mr. Hilbert.

"Really," said Mrs. Delien, "I have not laughed so much in a year as I have today. Believe me, real joy reigns here; God surely loves you."

"Yes," said Mr. Hilbert, "we love Him, too, and another thing we leave each other alone, mind our own business, that's why God has no trouble with us."

"Very good logic," said the Woman. "You are satisfied; that means all."

Mrs. Hilbert came in complaining that dinner was getting cold, so they all sat down to enjoy a good home dinner. Afterwards they all helped to clear the table; one washed, the other dried the dishes, and another put them away. Then they sat on the porch watching the sun set.

It was a holy hour for all. The Woman felt in a

shrine, her eyes resting over the hill by the apple orchard where the moon was slowly coming up. A sweet smell of mignonette and heliotrope filled the air. She told Mrs. Hilbert how well she kept up the lovely bush.

"Well," said the hostess, "the mignonette is my mother's favorite flower, and the heliotrope I like."

"What flower do you like best, Mrs. Job?" asked Ruth.

"Stop calling her that horrid name! It's all right for the Bible," said Mrs. Hilbert.

"Well," said Ruth, "what did you want to call me Ruth for? You certainly did not look for that in Webster's Dictionary. I want to tell you, ma, you could just as well have called me Rebecca as Ruth. If I have to follow Ruth, I will some day take care and rub noses with a mother-in-law instead of a loving husband. Rebecca at the Well has a better chance of meeting another feller."

They all laughed at the witty Ruth and the Woman answered the question as to her favorite flower by saying she had none.

"All," she said, "are symbolic of something. When I am sad, I like a violet; when I feel sacred, I want a lily. A rose takes a proud part, well defying with her thorns as she serves her mission."

"What do you want for love?" asked Ruth.

"A forget-me-not," said the Woman simply.

"That's right," said Mr. Hilbert, "if love is forgotten the world looks mighty dark, eh, ma?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hilbert, "if two only understand each other, then love wins." Turning to the Woman, Mrs. Hilbert kept on: "I am glad you came back still free. He (pointing in the direction of the Woman's former home) said you were married, and now here you are proving him a liar."

"Nobody believed him anyway, but it's a mighty nice thing to see you around," assured Mr. Hilbert.

They made plans for their trip while the Woman put Ronile to bed, and soon everybody in the Hilbert household was happy in Slumberland.

At sunrise everybody was up, for the folks were going to make a one hundred and thirty-six mile trip that day and "some mountain climbing, too," said the boss of the house. Austin cried; he wanted to stay with Ronile, and they promised to let him come back in two weeks with Mr. Hilbert, as "ma" would stay as long as she liked. Everybody felt light-hearted. Mrs. Hilbert felt sure now that the chickens would be fed and the baby chicks get proper care when it rained. She knew from Mrs. Delien's garden that it was always in perfect order and how she had always preserved everything. Ruth surely would have let some things go to waste.

CHAPTER XIX

WITH THE PANSY-FACED GARDENER

Thus the robbery lead Mrs. Delien and Ronile to a change of unexpected happiness, freedom and home surroundings. Ronile took music lessons and practiced two hours every day, with the remark that she would have more time to play when Austin came back. Then she would walk to the tent and pat the eye of God, thanking Him again and again for the Indian suits.

Often she would run over to the gardener to see Victor, the big dog. Her delight was great as she saw him perform all kinds of tricks. He would lie down pretending he was dead, then go into the shed to get wood for the fire. When they sprinkled the lawn he would change the hose from one place to another. Ronile even offered the gardener her Indian suit for Victor but the good man told her that Victor was very happy in his big home and maybe he would not like to rove around like a tramp.

"But," retorted Ronile, "we are not tramps, just because we travel around! Was Christ a tramp?" she asked. "He traveled!"

"Well," said the old gardener, "Christ was the Son of God, He had to so that the world could learn the words of God." Looking at Ronile with a kind expression, he pointed to the hothouse, saying: "If I take out these plants now they will not do so well. Everything has a place, even you, little partner. That place is right here. We just think that a new star shines in the daytime when we have you around."

"Then," said Ronile, eagerly, "if you keep these flowers in the hothouse, you will sell them and somebody will pull all their lovely petals off and they will die sooner than those on the outside on the bushes."

"That's right, my dear, but they will have served their mission."

"So have I!" answered Ronile.

"What is your mission?" he humorously inquired.



"Look, mother, deary, look! Josephine has a new coat and cap. The angels made the same stitch you do," cried Ronile, joyously.—Page 44.

She thought a while, then looked around as if to find a way to express herself; her eyes rested on the sky and then she said, "I will lead God's breath into hungry souls."

"By Jove," cried the gardener, "who told you that?"

"My mother!" she said.

"That's pretty wise talk for a little lady like you."

"Well," said she, with an earnest look at the flowers, "everything must die; so must we; and mother says every morning I should stretch out my arms like the birds' wings. Then I should look up to God and ask, while I take deep breaths, to have His breath enter in."

"What is God's breath?" asked the interested gardener.

"Air," replied the girl.

"But how are you going to teach hungry souls to feed on that air called God's breath?"

"By telling them it is!"

"Is what?"

"That air is 'God's breath,'" she answered impatiently. "Oh, Mr. Forster, you don't understand," and she started to leave him, but the good man knew well the meaning of that child's soul, yet he took keen delight in her sincerity.

He picked a small bunch of pansies and handed them to her, saying: "Keep it up; feed the souls, while I raise flowers. The world never did you any harm, I dare say."

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed. "The darling faces. I wonder if God made these after you?" and she went on, "He must have, because they look like you, Mr. Forster. I always used to think your face was in every pansy."

"Why?" asked the giver.

"Just look at your face! This pansy has a beard just like yours, all around its darling face."

"Well, well," replied the gardener, "you certainly gave me the best compliment. My girls call me a hairy beast."

She looked at him pityingly, then stroked his beard, saying, "Never mind, I like you that way!"

"Well, then," he answered jovially, "I won't worry about them any more, as long as you think I am all right."

She looked at the bunch of pansies in her hand again and said, "I must put them in water; otherwise they may die before their time."

"All right," said the kind gardener, "now don't forget to come over often. I want you to put a little of God's breath into me, too!" and shaking his head he pulled out his tobacco and filled his pipe. He watched his little friend as she ran across the empty lot holding the pansies carefully, mumbling to himself, "A mighty clever little girl."

In the evening he told his women-folks, as he called them, about the wise talk of the little girl.

"Well," said one daughter, a spinster of broad and wholesome ideas, "seems to me the Woman is not as bad as he made her. If she had another man she would not be here for good."

"Yes," said the other, "one would think she would never want to see this miserable old place again after all she suffered."

"Well," said the father, "the past doesn't seem to bother them. They have a wonderful way of looking at things, at least Ronile has, and surely the mother has too, otherwise the child would not say such things." He laughed broadly as he told them about her saying that God made the pansies after him, with a beard on their darling faces.

"Well," said Rose, the older daughter, "when she was a tiny thing I remember how Georgie Adams carried her to Sunday School and if I recollect right she was not over two years old. Why she recited that piece, 'Hush, my pretty little dear,' just wonderfully, and say, she would not do it though without a stage. We had to put a newspaper on the floor so she could have her platform."

"Poor little Georgie Adams," said the younger sister, "how long has he been dead now?"

"About four years," said the father. "I remember the time he was killed, poor boy, touching that live wire after the awful storm. Why, it killed the crops in most places, and blew one of my hothouses to splinters."

"Yes," said Rose, "and do you remember how Ronile came with her bank in her hand to buy some flowers for Georgie?"

"I'll never forget," said Alice, the younger sister, "when I took her back, bank and all. No one knew about her even leaving the house."

"Yes," said the father, "she wanted to buy lots of flowers, I remember, and knowing that that was her bank she was willing to give me bank and all for Georgie's flowers."

"She was always an odd child," said Rose, looking into space recalling some of Ronile's pranks. After that evening the two sisters made it a point to be present when Ronile came again to give her pansy friend more "wise talk," as they called it. So the gardener's people received lots of information from their little "world-rover," as they sometimes called her, just to see a defiant flash in her eyes.

"Well," said Ronile, "if you sit here, how can you think different? Did you ever see an amphitheater?"

"No," said the sisters.

"Well, then, it takes a rover to tell you about it, doesn't it?" asked Ronile.

"Yes," said Alice, "tell us what you saw there."

"Well, some sweet singers."

"What did they sing?"

"Oh," said Ronile, raising her brow, "the Stabat Mater Dolorosa."

"What does that mean?" asked Rose.

"That means the heart-cry from Christ's mother."

"You don't say," answered Rose. "Where was that?"

"Oh, at the amphitheater in Berkeley," she replied.

"When?" kept on Rose.

"Holy Week, on Good Friday."

"You are a lucky girl," said Alice, "and we want you to tell the Sunday School class all about it, will you?"

"Yes, I will, gladly," said Ronile. "But can I tell them about the buffalos and kangaroos at Golden Gate Park? You know," she went on, "the kangaroos carry their babies in a pocket that grows right on them."

"Well," said the old gardener, "you will have to make an allowance in your class next Sunday and give the children a lecture on the beasts in Golden Gate Park."

"But, Mr. Forster!" said Ronile eagerly, "kangaroos

are not beasts. They are very lovable. Sometimes you can only see the ears of their babies sticking out as they hop along with them tucked in."

"Right you are," said the gardener, "a beast is a ferocious animal," and Ronile nodded in a satisfied way. She told them about the concerts every Sunday in Golden Gate Park. "And it is lovely," she said. "In the summer the trees in the sunken garden before the music stand have all their leaves to keep the sun away because it is hot. Then in the winter, when it gets cooler, the leaves fall off to let the sun warm the people."

"God certainly finds a way of warming old people's backs when they want to hear good music," said the old gardener.

"By the way," said Rose, "do you play?"

"I do, but not many pieces, just one called Violet," said Ronile.

"She is bound to stick with the flowers," laughed the gardener, as they watched her playing with Victor.

"There," said Rose, "when she don't want to keep up, you can't make her."

"Well," said the father, "that's what I call a strong mind, and besides it isn't right to keep pumping too much out of her. She may get tired and not come over so often."

"That's right," said Alice, "we must not lose her for we do enjoy her talk." Thus they humored her each day with cake and flowers just to get a bit of her wisdom, gained in roving the world.

Mrs. Delien and Ruth kept busy sewing, to Ruth's great delight. There came only a few "darns" from Ruth, as the days passed, for she promised to act very ladylike. She also manicured her finger nails and many times wished the work were not so dirty. There was great fear of breaking a nail when she weeded the garden, for she had admitted to Mrs. Delien, as she held her hands toward the light, fingers down, that the nails looked like drops of water. She was more careful not to let pots get burned for fear of breaking her nails in scouring them.

After two weeks there was a pretty display of summer frocks. Ruth looked her best as she went to church in a

flimsy, soft, dotted swiss, with light blue ribbon around her waist and on the sleeves, bringing the short puff to a neat finish above the elbow. She wore a pair of long silk gloves for the first time and if God was not quite satisfied with her devotion that Sunday, thought Ruth, He could hardly blame her for feeling so proud. During the sermon she felt an envious look from her old school enemy, Minnie Finch. She raised her head airily and ignored the envious look from that "freckled-faced minx," as she called her. There was no attention paid to the sermon, for she was too busy sitting prim, or touching her hat with the new silk flowers.

"My," she thought, "if that minx ever sees them!" Then she would raise her arms slightly to show her long gloves. After the services she told the Woman how glad she was to show that spiteful old cat Minnie Finch how to dress. She did not notice the distressed look on her friend's face as she went on, saying that Minnie's father would have to sell the old cow to get her an outfit like that.

Mrs. Delien took Ruth firmly by the shoulders and looked sadly into her eyes, saying, "If I had known that this outfit would create spite instead of thanks to God, I would never have made it."

"Well," said Ruth, "can't I get a chance to show that spiteful, old thing how nice I can look?"

"No," said her friend, "you showed God how weak you are in being spiteful yourself. Oh, deary, now your dresses don't seem the same to me. They have lost their beauty and wholesomeness. You attracted the envious look from what you term a rival, thus putting her mentally on your basis."

"I didn't touch her," cried Ruth, almost in tears.

"No, you didn't," said the Woman, "but in the house of God you made sure that another mind was away from worship by drawing attention to yourself, thus causing an envious vibration instead of pure, simple devotion. I am ashamed before God that I used the powers He gave me to create such beautiful things and then caused disturbance in the hour, the only one in all the week that He expects us to commune with Him. See, dear, we expect

Him to be ever near us and help us, but what do we do to get nearer to Him? He is so merciful and forgives, therefore, if you make up your mind to be nice and think of Him only while in His house of worship, I am sure He will forgive you this time."

"But," said Ruth, "I saw her look at me, the horrid old thing."

"Now, dear," said Mrs. Delien, "don't use those words. If you had smiled nicely at her and not spitefully in a haughty way, she would have been happy to see you look so nice."

"Not she!" said Ruth, gruffly, "you don't know her. Why she already goes out with the boys."

"And she will pay the consequences," said the Woman. "If she is weak, Ruth dear, you must be strong to help her by giving a good example."

"That girl doesn't know what example means. She has always been a dunce in school!"

"There we have it," said the Woman. "Perhaps her bringing up was not what it should be. You see, dear, not everybody has the good fortune to be born in the lap of brilliant parents like yours. God will judge her less for her wrongs because she was not raised on proper soil, yet she may adorn a high place in God's garden some day."

"She'd have to be a tiger lily," said Ruth, pouting, "with her freckles."

The Woman laughed at Ruth's perception of God's garden, and said: "Are you not thankful that you were chosen for me to make things for? God might have picked her. Poor Minnie. She doesn't know how a silk glove feels."

"I should say not; her hands are like a cow's tongue; you could grate a potato on them for pancakes," said Ruth spitefully.

"Has she no piano?" asked the Woman.

"The washboard is all she plays on, the poor simp."

"Now, Ruth, please don't use any more slang," and there was a determined look on the Woman's face as they were washing the dinner dishes.

Ruth looked worried; she loved her friend and did

not want to hurt her feelings. She looked out, wishing her father would come home or a thunder storm would come up—anything to make a change in the situation, even thunder, and that she hated, but she would not mind if something struck her meanness, she thought. Her heart was big, but her tongue loose, Mrs. Hilbert had said once. The Woman smiled as she thought of those words, and Ruth saw that smile. She threw down the dish-cloth, wiped her hands on her apron, and held on to her friend in glee.

“Oh, I know,” she cried happily, “you are not mad at me, are you?”

“Only dogs get mad,” said the Woman.

“Angry,” corrected Ruth, and looked her friend squarely in the eyes and said: “I would sooner die. I could not stand it. Why, I hate storms and wished for one so you would talk to me. I am sorry that there is so much spitefulness in me, but I promise you to be like you even if it is hard. If Minnie were here now I would kiss her just to show you how I mean it.”

The Woman took her little friend in a tender embrace and kissed her ardently, then said: “You don’t like me to be angry with you because you respect my sincerity. I am only a woman like you and think of the great omnipotent power of God; how terrible it is to disobey Him and arouse His anger. Is it not better to respect Him when He owns everything, even us? For when He calls us we must obey. We leave our body and join Him and if we don’t know the way we cannot find Him; then we wander in darkness.” She put her arm around Ruth and led her to the porch. Pointing up to the sky, she said, “Suppose the Father should call you now.”

Ruth shuddered as she looked hopelessly at her adviser. “I hope He won’t,” she cried, with tears in her eyes. “I—I,” she stammered, “want to make good. If I could only get hurt to suffer some, so God would forgive me.”

“Oh, my dear little girl,” said the Woman, “I will show you a way to make good without suffering.” They took off their aprons, then gave the chicks fresh water and taking their parasols, strolled along the country road. They passed some farm houses and Ruth wondered where she

was going, when she beheld Minnie standing by the gate, holding a flower and talking to a neighbor boy named Ed. Mrs. Delien walked over and took her hands in hers, holding them a while and looking into the tiger lily face with supreme love and tenderness.

She made a low bow of solemn respect to the awkward Ed, then looking at the bewildered Ruth, said, "How would you like to entertain these young people at your house this afternoon, deary?"

Minnie looked at her old enemy in surprise but Ruth put her arms around her old school chum's shoulder and begged her to come and bring Ed, too.

There was a curious expression on Minnie's countenance as she listened, and seeing that the invitation was a serious one, she threw both her arms up in the air and ran back to the house, calling to her invalid mother, "Oh, Marm, Ruth asked me to come to her house, can I go?"

A smile supreme greeted the Woman, as she walked over to the house to speak to the sick mother, who lamented that Minnie never had a chance to go anywhere and that she had cried while she ate her dinner because Ruth snubbed her in church.

"Ruth did not mean it," explained the Woman, "these girls simply did not understand each other; they are both wonderful girls." In leaving she told the farmer's wife to pray for her ailments as God was near where nature was so abundantly beautiful.

"Oh," said the weary farmer woman, "I don't know. He seems to have forgotten me."

"It is exactly the same," said Mrs. Delien, "as when you telephone and the other party does not take off the receiver—you cannot get connected. So with us; if we don't know the Father, how should He know us?" Looking around she beheld hundreds of fruit trees and wonderful patches of crops. She pointed to them, saying: "He is everywhere here with you. Don't you know Christ's saying, 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven?' How splendidly your crops are cared for. You keep them free from weeds. That is why they stand erect in all their strength, because no weeds absorb their vitality. There are weeds in you;

they are like two worms called disgust and distrust. They gnaw on the vital cord of your being, making you helpless. Then you blame God. Here you have carefully removed the weeds but have forgotten yourself. Try it; we all need overhauling at times. Faith is the only weapon you need to remove those worms."

"How can I go to church when I can hardly walk across the room?" asked the invalid.

"It is not church you need to see into yourself. Most people go to church for a purpose—some to let the minister do the praying, others to display their garments." Ruth walked away at that and the Woman saw only how red her ears looked as she made haste to reach the gate.

The Woman continued: "Mrs. Finch, you have been planted here to serve Him; He put you on these grounds and now you sit and complain, causing God to make you ill. It is rheumatism you have, is it not?"

"Yes," replied the invalid.

"Well, I remember ten years ago we bought all our berries and fruit here, and in the early spring you were out all kinds of weather. I told you at that time that some day you would have rheumatism, as after one gets his blood chilled it forms into lumps, and stops circulation, thus causing that part of the body to congest, making it swell and causing great pain."

"Ten years ago," replied the invalid, "I was well and did not mind it, but now I am not good for anything."

"You did not abide by the law of nature. See, the men had rubber boots on and they are spared these pains; but you thought there was no end to your strength, and yet nature teaches how far one can go."

A light came into the eyes of the stricken woman. She held out both hands and said: "If you were here longer, why there wouldn't be anyone sick. You'll just talk it out of me, I dare say."

"Well," replied Mrs. Delien, happily, "try to talk yourself out of it—I showed you the way. Good-by. God be with you"; so saying Mrs. Delien left with her happy party, a look toward heaven for grace and thanks for the power to sow another good seed.

They took the awkward, clumsy farm-children into the parlor. Ruth played the piano and the Woman served root beer and some cake Mrs. Hilbert had made before she left.

"Minnie had the broadest smile on her freckled face I ever saw," said Ruth as they watched their guests hurry over the hill "to help get the milk strained," as Minnie said.

"Oh, you darling!" cried Ruth. "Is that the way you punished me to make me good?"

"Yes," said the Woman, "I know God will forgive you now for you made poor Minnie so happy."

"I never thought she was so nice," said Ruth.

"Because you never looked for her good qualities," answered the Woman. "How does an echo sound?" she asked Ruth.

"As you call," answered Ruth.

"Well, there you are. She is just as good as you make her, and her life is not so easy, my dear. You must help her bear up. Look at the difference in your sweet mother and her bitter lump of flesh to contend with all day long."

"Yes," said Ruth, "I am going to give her a piano lesson every Sunday afternoon."

"I knew it," smiled the Woman. "You are just the best little pal for her," and kissing her three times she showed her how she meant it.

CHAPTER XX

THE PRESENTIMENT; WITH A TRIP TO CONEY ISLAND

Going into the kitchen, Mrs. Delien prepared a cold lunch and put it on the dining-room table.

"What are you doing that for?" asked Ruth.

"Oh," replied the Woman, "your father and Austin and some one else will be here shortly."

"Who can the someone else be?" thought Ruth; then turning to her friend she asked, "How do you know Pa is coming?"

"I feel it," replied the other.

"But how?"

"Well, I just feel him coming nearer and I picture him to be in Plainfield by now. It just appears to me that way and I hear him talking to a woman; it sounds like your Aunt Emma's voice."

Ruth jumped in glee.

"Oh, my aunt," she said. "What a good time we will have if she comes."

Before long they were running down the street to meet the party from Pennsylvania. Aunt Emma was there, much to Ruth's surprise, and she thought: "HOW did she know? Well, I'll be good; that will be my motto."

There were happy days following. A trip to Coney Island was planned. "By boat," suggested Ruth. So they all got ready after Aunt Emma had a few days' rest. It was the first trip Aunt Emma had ever made by boat, and every little jerk set her jumping up nervously, but the music seemed a good remedy to quiet poor aunt's nerves. Ruth had smuggled a small baby-faced toy with a whistle at the end. She would hold the baby's mouth shut and then blow it open, thus creating a perfect baby cry. She held the mysterious baby carefully wrapped in the end of her veil. Aunt Emma seemed greatly alarmed at the mysterious cry and kept lamenting about the ridiculous people who did not know how to take care of a baby.

"Catch me bringing a poor little baby on a boat of this kind," she said. "Gracious sakes alive, this is my first boat

ride, as old as I am, and it came too soon. There's a feeling in me now as if I want to turn inside out. Oh, dear, I wish I were at home on the hill. Land sakes, if I could only see the child! No wonder it cries, if it feels as sick as I do."

There was not a smile on Ruth's face as she at rapid intervals uttered the mysterious baby cries. Not only poor aunty was alarmed; many other people on the boat looked around, some holding the food in their mouths as they listened and forgetting to partake of their picnic goodies.

Mrs. Delien noticed how pale Aunt Emma's face was getting and thought of bringing an end to the mysterious sounds. Sitting behind Ruth, she watched her chance. When the mischief-maker blew the whistle again, she pushed her, thus making a regular squall out of the wailing cry. Some thought an accident had happened and ran leaving their lunch behind.

Poor aunty was hanging over the railing thinking the ship was going down, as she murmured in a choked voice, "God help me, I want to look death in the face if it must be." Mrs. Delien grabbed her and pushed her carefully into her seat; then she pulled the mysterious trouble-maker from under Ruth's arm. At the sight of the little toy, Aunt Emma looked fiercely at her niece, too angry to speak.

The Woman noticed this and remarked, "If those eyes of yours were daggers now, poor Ruth would be stabbed." In Aunt Emma's generous nature, daggers and malicious objects had no place and she did not wish to be classed as harboring such horrid things as daggers in her looks, so she smiled, consoled at the thought that there was not a poor little baby in it after all. She took great delight, however, in seeing others get fooled by the silly little whistle, as she called it.

On arriving at the long pier in Coney Island, the Woman held Aunt Emma by the arm as she did not watch where she was going. Her eyes were following the shoot-the-chutes, turning around to see where they went, and never watching where she was going.

"So many people! Where do they all come from?" she stammered nervously. "Goodness gracious sakes alive, why there are more people on this pier alone than in our whole town."

The Woman asked her why she stopped and stared at a policeman.

"Well," she said, "I want to remember his face. Sakes alive, we may get lost and not find the ship to go back."

"Oh," laughed Mrs. Delien, "he will be off duty by the time we are going home. Never mind, dear, don't worry, we will find our way back."

So they marched toward the beach. Auntie could not at first partake of the lunch. In her clean, good mind, she was too absorbed by the "brazen things" who had the nerve to dress so scantily.

"What would our minister say if he saw me here in a crowd of this kind? Sakes alive! I hope no one is here from up home. I'd be ashamed to show my face."

They all tried to explain that it is customary to have such suits, as it gives more benefit to get the electricity out of the water into the body.

"Well," said auntie, "I'd be afraid God would strike their miserable bare bodies if they have no modesty and shame in 'em." The invigorating ocean air, however, crept slowly into that mountain girl's lungs, filled them up with fresh vigor, thus compelling her to eat with great appetite, and enjoy the day after all.

Austin and Ronile wanted to go bathing, but Mr. Hilbert wanted them to wait until noon, so they took in the sights. He purchased a set of tickets for Luna Park, giving them tickets for the "Bowl of Joy," and suggesting that Aunt Emma take the one for the "Helter Skelter." She scolded him for spending so much money.

"Well, it's your first time and we might as well make a good day of it," he replied. Poor Aunt Emma watched the children getting thrown from one side to the other in the bowls.

"Well," said her brother-in-law, "you had better use the ticket; no use wasting any." Mrs. Delien said she would go with her, so she was willing. They sat on small mats. Mrs. Delien carefully tucked her skirts under and slid along, holding on to the mat. She told her partner to do the same, then went rapidly down the chute. Aunt Emma followed, but in the excitement forgot to hold on to the mat, and throwing her arms over her head, she came

down in somersaults. There was an awful scream when she recovered. First she looked around for a chance to disappear. They followed her, overcome with laughter.

"Why did you not hold on to the mat?" asked Mrs. Delien, trying to console her.

"How could I?" said the poor girl, still shivering. "Oh, Lord, forgive me, that's what I get in a sinful place of this kind. Wish to goodness I had never seen it." At this remark she looked around giving the impression of a victim in a lion's den. She rubbed her knees and elbows, but would not give in to her brother-in-law's remark that it hurt.

"You're a poor sport; just look how they all come down," but Aunt Emma would not look back, her attention being centered on the gate.

They sat by a large pond. Suddenly they heard a splash, and turning around Aunt Emma threw up her arms in despair. The children were coming down in a boat from a high platform at great speed. The boat glided into the water, bringing its happy, shouting contents to the shore.

Emma took Mr. Hilbert by the arm and shook him vigorously. "You have no sense," she scolded; "if the boat had capsized, they'd all be drowned." She looked at the book in her hand, wishing that no more tickets were left.

"Well," he said, "the worst is over; only two more left and we will all be together." Aunt Emma went, glad to put an end to those tickets. Then they had an ice cream and went back to the beach, and all went in bathing except aunty, who could not be coaxed as she said someone must watch the lunch baskets and apparel.

At eight o'clock they took the boat home, looking back at the wonderful brilliant sight.

"A City of Lights," said Aunt Emma. Then she agreed that it had been a nice day in spite of the shocks.

"You would make a good sport, after all," said her brother-in-law.

"Well," she answered, "I am glad I went. Now when the folks ask me about Coney I'll have it all over them."

CHAPTER XXI

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

A few days later, they received a letter from Mrs. Hilbert, who was still visiting in Pennsylvania, saying that one of the neighbors, a friend of Aunt Emma's, was crazy.

"Oh," cried the latter, "I knew it; she's been smitten by that Ouija Board ever since her mother died. The poor girl! After she's supported the old lady, and now could have it easy, she goes crazy."

Mrs. Delien looked concerned, but said nothing. In the evening she suggested that all sit in silence and pray as it might help the poor girl. All hurried to get the table cleared. The Woman went out alone. They saw her climb College Hill. Slowly she walked in silent meditation. After sundown she returned with a mild, patient look on her face. She asked if all were ready. They were. The Woman laid the Bible on the table, and a vase with mixed flowers; also a glass of water. They watched her silently, as she sacredly went about the performances.

When all were seated around the table, she took the Bible and read from the Fourteenth Chapter of St. John: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also, and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." She closed the book and looked up, saying: "Thou wilt come again, oh Lord. Then we beseech Thee in Thine truth. We, Thine children, are assembled here to plead for another. If its mind is ill, something controls that mind, and Thou art the healer of minds in darkness. A blind lamb who labored for a loved one. In our Father's house are many mansions, wherein that loved one also dwells. A hungry heart needs comfort, a mother's gentle touch. Thou didst recall the spirit of many and they profited by thine return, a communion with loved ones departed. We, therefore, know that in Thy power lies the light for darkened mind."

Thus concluding she turned out the lights and still the room was illuminated. Mr. Hilbert closed the shutters and blinds but the light remained. Sometimes it traveled along the wall or ceiling; then it remained still in the center of the circle.

The Woman sang, "Lead Kindly Light, 'Mid the Encircling Gloom," in a sacred tremor. All joined and as the choir of enchanted singers became louder a cross seemed to manifest itself so brilliantly that it dazed them, as it slowly rose up to the ceiling and disappeared. The Woman stretched out her arms, singing, "Lead Thou Me On." Then all sat in silence for a long time.

After closing the sacred meeting, Mr. Hilbert said: "Now I believe in what you told us about that astral trip. No electric power could produce such brilliancy as that lighted cross."

"Yes," said the woman, "the power of the cross. It pays to be crucified; that is the only road where we meet the Master in all His mercy." Aunt Emma could not speak for a long time. Ruth looked at the Woman with a mixed expression of awe and fear, resolving not even to think wrong, for lately the Woman had told her what she was thinking about.

The next letter came, telling about the insane girl; how the minister said she was possessed of an evil spirit, and the doctors suggested removing her to an asylum. Aunt Emma was inconsolable, saying that if the minister and the doctor could not help her, she was lost.

Looking straight at Aunt Emma, the Woman said: "Why have you more faith in your minister and doctor than in Christ? Did not the cross prove His presence?"

"But He said nothing," replied the former.

"I did not ask Him to speak," replied the Woman. "All I appealed for was the light and it came, therefore I know the Master will help your poor friend."

"To think," wailed Aunt Emma; "the best girl I know. Why she never said a wicked word in all her life. and now to think that the evil controls her." She was too much grieved and afraid to mention even that wicked fellow controlling hell.



Thus the silken fabric was twisted into a huge basket of flowers.

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"Well," said the Woman in a consoling tone, "evil always tries to enter the good; with the wicked it doesn't have to try. There evil influence always has admission, is even sought. Christ had to battle with the evil and He won. Job was ruined by evil but rewarded by God. When Solomon was troubled by evil spirits, David would play the harp to drive them away. This shows that evil doesn't like harmony. Our harmony is built right in us, but we lose control of that wonderful harp called Nerve System. We fly apart, looking for a hold, losing our main hold on the nerve control. If, when the great shock comes, like a loved one departing, we could only keep quiet and steadfast. The journey for that loved one, called by the Angel of Resurrection, is often interrupted by a loud shriek of an unreasonable member. The soul must return and has to labor all over again, making the response of, 'Why did you call me back?' Reason is at such times most important. If they by the bedside could see how hard it is for some of the souls to proceed. In reproaching, you only draw a bitter, reproachful element in spirit and the poor soul has to battle with them."

"Oh, my God," said Aunt Emma; "I can't think of it. Why were we ever born?"

"For a purpose," replied the Woman. "You were born to take my place here for a while and I was born to go up to your home and help that sick friend of yours." Aunt Emma's eyes and mouth opened wide, and she stared at the Woman quite speechless.

"Yes," she continued, amused at the surprised girl. "How wonderfully it has all been arranged by the divine law. You had to come and take my place, so I could go, and I will do so in the morning; otherwise the poor girl will be put into an asylum and I will lose the chance to help her."

Mr. Hilbert offered to take the Woman, but she knew he was too busy, so she just let him take her to the ferry and then went alone on the train. He wanted to telegraph Mrs. Hilbert of her coming, but she told him it would frighten the poor woman as she always saw only an evil omen in a dispatch. Unfortunately some people only resort to such

ways of transmitting messages in times of disaster. In joy they most always refrain from circulating news hastily, which is a great error as it then will have the effect Mrs. Hilbert always feared.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the Woman climbed the big hill. She knew the little white house way up from the correct description Aunt Emma gave her. Coming closer she beheld most of the inhabitants outside looking toward the top of the hill. She followed their gaze and beheld some figures on the highest point. One stood erect, the others were kneeling on the ground weeping and praying. The Woman hurried to the scene. Mrs. Hilbert recognized her western friend. Explaining to those nearest her she ran to meet the Woman. "Oh," she said, "for five days that poor thing hasn't eaten a mouthful of food. She will not even drink water now. The Woman went into the house and asked for a glass of water. Then escorted by her friend they went up to the stricken girl. There was not a sign of life in that form as it stood with eyes cast up.

"A lost soul has possession of that body, trying to redeem itself," said the Woman. She walked briskly toward the girl, spilling some of the water in her hand and sprinkled it over the rigid figure.

"Now, I am lost," they heard the victim say. The Woman then took the hand of the girl, who slowly cast her eyes at her. There was a strong look from the Woman holding that glance. Then she took the glass and held it up to the girl's mouth and gave her three swallows, repeating, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit that prevails." There was another look that met her eyes, one that told of much anxiety, but the Woman gave her three more swallows, then three more, repeating each time the name of the Holy Trinity. Then she put her arm around the girl's waist and led her down the steep hill, much to the amazement of the eager neighbors, who were all watching the sights of Crazy Mary as they called her by now. The Woman looked accusingly at them as she passed, but did not speak. Her look, however, seemed to say enough for they went home with bowed heads. She lead the worn, staggering girl into the house, took off her shoes that had been on for five days as no one could undress her,

Then she ordered warm water and put a handful of salt in the foot tub. In the meantime, she had her dressed in a clean nightgown and sat her on the bed, never letting her go; she always held one hand on her as if she wanted to hold fast on something. When they brought the foot tub she ordered another glass of water. While the girl held her feet in the soothing foot bath she again gave her three swallows of water. The Woman put the glass with water on the left side of the bed, asking a member to cover it with a white kerchief. She dried the girl's feet and pushed the water under the bed; then she carefully laid her down and asked if there was something blessed in the house. They did not know what she meant.

"Just a Bible or something," the Woman explained.

"Oh, yes," they said. "We have mother's prayer book here."

"That's fine," said the Woman. She opened it and read a while aloud.

"My," said one of the sisters, "that was mother's favorite prayer; if she didn't always pray that!" After awhile the Woman closed the book and laid it under the pillow of the girl, who lay with closed eyes like one who had paved the last road on life's journey. She then pulled the bed from the wall and slowly walked around it, three times, praying silently. She then opened the windows and told them all to leave the room and let the girl rest.

"Oh," said the brother, a big country boy, "we closed the windows because she wanted to jump out." The smile that greeted him from the strange woman, who had done more than all the town, assured him that he need not fear because the girl was in good care now.

"But she is alone now," he protested.

"Oh, no," said the Woman, "you could not count all in that room."

They sat in the living room and the Woman proved that Mary was not alone by naming all the departed and told them how they passed out. It was not the right place to tell such proofs, for some of them walked out looking at the Woman as if she herself were possessed. Once in awhile she would look into the bedroom and find the girl peacefully sleeping. In the evening they all sat at the supper

table, Mary at her usual place, fussing about the old rag carpet getting wrinkled under the chair.

They all sat on the porch watching the sunset, when one of the neighbors came over, making her way straight to Mary, saying: "How are you? Do you know me yet?"

The Woman just pushed her arm in front of the advancing busybody, and said, "Who could ever forget you when once they saw you?"

There was a fiery, hateful look from the neighbor, who was led back to the steps by the "brazen, imposter of a strange woman, who had come to rule the hill," she flung back at the Woman. It did not seem to affect the stranger, however, she just told her that the show was over and there would be no more acting on Mary's part; that they, pointing around the neighborhood, would have to look for amusement elsewhere. Then she left the angry woman, who joined the other gossiping groups and by the way her hands flew all agreed that if they ever went through the head of anyone now, there would not be much hair left.

Mary's brother smiled all over his broad face as he pushed a chair over for the Woman to sit down.

"Gee," he said, "that's the time she got it, that old sinner; she had to get the news for the rest. Now she got left and it serves her right."

"She can't help it," said the Woman; "she knows no better. I would not want to live her life, as she is never herself, always in other vibrations, thus suffering with others, not in sympathy, but in inquisitiveness." Turning to Mrs. Hilbert she told of the trip to Coney Island, carefully avoiding Emma's ride on the Helter Skelter. They all laughed, much to the surprise of the neighbors who were constantly on the jump, wondering what Crazy Mary would do next.

As soon as the stars came out the Woman told Mary to take a glass of milk and go to bed.

"Yes," replied the girl, "I am tired and want to sleep." She kissed the Woman as she left and thanked her again and again.

"Funny," said one of the members, "she never calls for mother any more on the Ouija."

"Let me see that board," said the Woman. She looked at it carefully and then handed it to the brother and told him to burn it.

"What will the neighbors say if we destroy the board? Why Mary was the only one it worked for."

"Yes," said the Woman, "and worked her almost into her grave. If Mary had been alone at it with good thinking people it would never have harmed her, but there they absorbed all her strength in having their fortunes told, and thus in a weakened condition she could not keep her body and soul together. In trying to get her mother on the board, someone else tried to impersonate that loved one, just to get the sympathy of the victim and held on to that worn-out body, to work out its own salvation. It was never Mary who said, 'I am lost.' You all know how her face changed in expression as her own self returned. That is why so many insane people harbor just one mania, some for murder, or religion, or for self-destruction. Just note that one suicide in a family has mostly other members follow in the same mania of self-destruction. The spirit of the first suicide claims the others. Take, for instance, a murderer. They seldom know what they do when they commit the crime. In some cases it is called temporary insanity. They are insane at the time; they brood a long time, then they take intoxicating drinks, in most cases to deaden self-consciousness, and after the crime is committed they wipe their foreheads and say: "My God, what have I done?"

"You don't believe in capital punishment?" asked one of the party.

"No," said the Woman, "I could not agree at any time on taking a life for another."

"You are right," said the brother. "Well, I will burn the darn thing, and if those gossips need more fortunes told, I will tell them with a pitchfork, by gum, rather than have Mary act like that again."

"Yes," said the Woman, "if anyone wishes to communicate with spirits, it is a very dangerous road unless one is well guided by angels. They are ready but do not come unless we go half way in calling them. No prayer is unanswered. We get according to our appeal. The Father

gave us free will and law. There is a law sign on every corner of the mystery path—'Beware,' it is called. If we resort to material ways of reaching into higher realms we lose. Materially, we connect with earthbound spirits who never care to elevate."

"They must be saved," said one.

"Yes, they will in time if we just live a good, wholesome life. They see our freedom and want to do the same. This way we will help them more than in giving them our body to corrupt. If a soul does not spare a body and tortures the victim, then it is not fit for elevation. Many people get headaches at certain times; they come quickly and go the same way. That is sometimes a soul entering a body that shot itself through the brain. As we live, so we die. Such a soul is poor indeed. It doesn't know where to go, for it has no magnetic compass to lead it on. It violated God's law in self-destruction, then the spirit remains around hanging on some member of the family driving that one also to destruction. In time, however, they can manifest again by getting new brain cells to think and work their way toward salvation."

"Gee," said the brother, "if that is the way, I would never commit suicide."

"Then why," asked another, "did Jesus let Judas hang himself?"

"He knew it before," the Woman answered. "It was the consequences of Judas' desire that led to it; greed for money made him sell his Master. Christ could not prevent wages of sin; He was fair."

"Then capital punishment ought to be fair," said the boy.

"No, otherwise Christ would not have forgiven the man on the cross," replied the Woman.

"That's right," said they.

"Let's all do the best we can," said the Woman, as she rose to retire.

It was a wonderful night; the stranger was led into a room facing the east. It was furnished in white. The lamp with its mellow light gave the new inhabitant a warm welcome. She gazed slowly around the simple clean fur-

nishings, took up a book to read awhile, and then undressed. After blowing out the light she opened a door which led to the adjoining room where Mary and a sister had retired. They called out, asking if she was comfortable.

"Yes," answered the guest, "I am very contented. It is just the spot where I am lying that your dear mother breathed her last."

"Gracious sakes," said Anna, "who told her that mother died in that room? Now she may not sleep well." And calling out she said, "Who told you that mother died there?"

"She did," replied the Woman.

"But you never knew her."

"I do now. Why I just felt her breath and I'll tell you what she looks like." The Woman described fully the details of the departed soul, even her teeth; that there were only three left on the upper jaw. "Now go to sleep and worry no more; all is well. Your dear mother is free to be with you any time, thanks to her good way of living," she concluded and turned over to sleep.

A grateful look went out toward the Maker and Keeper of those stars that rules so gently and fairly. She fell asleep, although a strange pillow would at times keep her awake all night, but the good thoughts of those plain people were like balm in which she slumbered until the first rays of sunshine entered and greeted her, joyously announcing one more day added to the record of time to do the best.

When the folks came down the Woman had already gone for a walk.

"How strange! She is not like other folks," they remarked as they went about preparing breakfast. Mary stood on the porch with outstretched arms to greet the Woman as she came down the lane with an armful of wild flowers. She kissed Mary and asked for a vase to put the wonderful creations of the Father in.

Then she placed them before the picture of their spirit mother, saying: "This is the best monument you can build for her. Fresh flowers, with a fresh memory from all make her stay with you a happy one."

They went into the dining room. The Woman walked

to the place where the mother used to sit and said, "Come, dear one, and partake if thou still hast desire for material food." She folded her hands and said grace. When she finished they remarked how she knew their mother's place at the table.

"I saw her go to it," she answered, "and for awhile you will have to ask her to eat with you until she has overcome the desire for food."

After breakfast they went out to work in the garden, and the Woman proved quite handy with the hoe. They remarked about it.

She smiled happily and said, "If people only knew what a benefit it gives the body to do a little exercise of this kind in the open air."

"It surely does seem to do you good," said Anna, "for you have such nice pink cheeks this morning. Last night you looked as pale as death."

"Well, my friends," replied the Woman, "I fought death. Insanity," she whispered, so Mary could not hear, "is an awful death and doing such work leaves the body in a weak condition." She straightened up and smiled, saying: "See, I recuperate very quickly, thanks to you good people. I am feeling better than I have in a long time. You ought to be very happy living in such a wonderfully healthful place as this."

Anna sighed and said, "The trouble in our home is that everyone is dissatisfied; one holds on and the other won't let go; there is fighting all the time." Looking toward the house she said: "It does look kind of nice. I never saw it so pretty. It seems you just make it look nicer."

"It is the way with everything," said the Woman wistfully. "Take, for instance, a person telling you about someone doing something evil. You may meet that person afterwards and the first thought that enters your mind is, 'that wicked person,' yet you never knew her to do anything wicked, you only heard it from a gossip and believed. In time the person may appeal to you, and in the course of time you yourself cannot find a trace of wickedness, yet you wait for it. Every time you see the poor soul you spring that thought on her and if she is not a positive nature she will be affected by your accusing thought and feel antagonistic

toward you by treating you in the same manner, thus causing hostility instead of friendship."

"If that isn't true," said Anna, the oldest of the family. "And say," she kept on soberly, "this town is just full of that kind—they never have a good thought for anybody. If a girl leaves town, she runs away; if she goes out with a fellow, there is something doing right then and there. You don't know what to do. I always was afraid of those gossips. That's why I never had the chance to marry, because I did not want them to give me a bad name."

"Poor Anna," said the Woman, "don't worry about remaining single, the Father wished it so. If you had met the right sort you would not have cared for anybody's remark. Love has a law of its own. It builds its own bridges and tears them down."

Looking down the street, Anna noticed the doctor's carriage and looked in alarm at Mary who was busy pulling weeds. The Woman saw the distressed look on Anna's face and motioned her not to disturb Mary and went down to the house with Anna. Anna introduced the Woman to the doctor. He made a slow bow, mumbled a few words and then looked at her in a scrutinizing manner.

He raised his brow and said, "I have heard of you from some of the people down below. By the way," he kept on, "there is another one who said she saw the devil up here on the hill, and that this woman brought him."

"Who was it?" inquired Anna.

He thought a moment and said, "Why, Mrs. Watkins."

The Woman smiled and said, "Is it not the one I told to leave last evening?"

"Sure," answered Anna, decidedly. "How do you know?"

"Well, I knew she would plant some poisonous seed of some kind, but it will dry up in time."

The doctor ignored the Woman and asked to speak with Anna alone. After a few minutes, the poor girl came out with an alarmed expression on her face telling her that the doctor had made arrangements to send Mary away.

In a second the Woman stood before him and said, "You had better transfer to another house; your work is done here at present."

"I am a scientific man, and have no use for your ghost affairs," the doctor replied.

"I did not ask you to interest yourself in my affairs," answered the Woman, "but you from your scientific point of view must prove that that patient whom you declared insane yesterday is sane today. Therefore you must leave her here."

"I want to see her," he said gruffly.

"Very well," answered the Woman, leaving the room and a few minutes later returning, talking quite sociably with what he called the insane girl. Mary walked over and greeted the old family friend as well as physician in a warm, cordial manner. His eyes softened as he stretched out both hands to greet her. There was a look of satisfaction on the face of the Woman, as she beheld the change in the doctor's feelings toward the girl.

He glanced at the stranger, she returned a sweet smile and then went over and shook his hands, saying, "You see, dear doctor, you are a physician for the body, I am for the soul," and pointing to Mary she said, "This happened to be my case."

He shook his head, smiling as he sized her up and said, "From the way the folks described you I thought you had the very fire of hell in your eyes, and here I find the most remarkable little woman. Where did you study this here—a—what do you call it, psychic power?"

"I don't know what you could call it," said the Woman simply. "I learned it through experience, doctor; Faith in Fate. Sometimes I feel as if I had seven eyes instead of two in my head."

"My," said Anna enthusiastically, "she's been a-tellin' us all kinds of wonderful things," and with her gray eyes glowing she related to the doctor all that had happened since the strange friend arrived.

Turning to the Woman, the doctor said, "Who sent you here?"

"Jesus Christ in His mercy," answered the Woman solemnly.

"How? Where did you see Him?"

"In Kenwood, New Jersey." A look of mixed feelings

swept over the queer stranger, but a candid smile answered the assured truth. Then she told them of the sitting in communion for the help of the stricken girl.

"Have you ever seen Him before?"

"I have, always, in times when I needed Him and called Him."

"Is it possible?" said the doctor.

"Why not?" answered the Woman. "He returned to His disciples and remained with them forty days; they believed in Him and in His return, and so do I."

"But," said the doctor, raising his finger cautiously, "cannot Satan ever come in form to tempt?"

"I never call him, nor do I know him," a slight frown forming on her brow as she spoke. "It seems to me," she said impatiently, "you people mention the names of evil ones more often than good ones. Thus you open the gates for evil to dwell. If you would only mention Christ in a sacred way as much as you do the devil. But in most houses His name is only used in an oath. I tell you, doctor," she said gravely, "scientific men, like you and the minister, have a great responsibility. The people depend upon you in everything; they don't think for themselves. You can drive them like a herd of sheep."

"How do you make that out?" he asked sharply.

"Well," she said pointing down the street, "you came here, after you heard these people drag me through the mire, to persecute me also. You did not know me, nor were you willing to meet me; you scorned me. After finding out that I spent my money to come here, leaving my child, to help a distressed sister of mine, without charge; just because I was sent to answer a prayer that these good people sent to heaven. I had enough sympathy in mankind to tackle even what they call a devil with just a heavenly gain in view."

"Have you a husband?" he asked, interested. "I hear you have a child."

"No," she answered.

"Dead?"

"No."

"Divorced?"

"Yes."

"Does Christ believe in divorce?" he kept on, thinking of taking some weapons out of her.

"Yes," she said without losing any of her poise. "He believes in anything that is wholesome. A sinful married life makes sinful children. They are bred in such environment and can't help the instinct and desire born in them."

"When does that start?" he kept on amused.

"At the time of conception," she answered.

"You're right there," he said. "If parents lived a more harmonious life there would not be much for physicians to do."

"Don't you think, doctor, that a lot of ailments originate from lack of harmony, worry and imagination?"

"Oh, yes," he said slowly, looking at Mary in a fatherly way as he stroked his beard. "Mary, you certainly look different than you did yesterday at this time."

"See," said the Woman, "there was nothing used but clear water. Christ had great faith in it. I have, for the way I studied it out is this: that it is the only thing that falls from the sky above to keep us alive, the only thing we cannot duplicate or live without, so I just use it in faith of healing virtue."

"I never thought of it in that way," he said, thoughtfully.

"But you agree there is something in it?"

"Oh, yes," he replied.

For the first time, Mary spoke and turning to the doctor she remarked how good that foot bath had been that the Woman gave her the night before.

"No wonder," said Anna, "she did not have her shoes off for five days."

"Well," said the doctor, "it started the blood to circulating."

"Yes," said Mary, "it seemed as if all the tired heaviness left me as I put my feet into it."

"Well, do it every night, Mary," he said in a jovial voice and turning to the Woman said, "If you find time come and see us; my wife would be glad to meet you."

"Yes," said Anna, "she could do your wife lots of good by telling her of Richard."

"Yes," he replied, "since that boy was drowned, wife has never been the same," and he left remarking that he had many morning calls to make before the noon office hours. Passing by the Woman as he went out he said, "I am not a bit sorry over the delay and hope to see you soon."

"Will be very happy to call," answered the stranger, waving another good-by.

It was getting too hot to work in the garden. Mrs. Delien had dinner with Emma's folks but had promised to bring Mrs. Hilbert for supper. Either the doctor or the Woman seemed to have worked a miracle on the hill, as soon one after another of the neighbors passed the house, looking interested, not inquisitive, as they politely inquired how things were. The Woman greeted them in a loving way.

"Why," said one neighbor, "one would think to talk to her that we had known her all our lives."

Mrs. Delien visited the doctor and found the wife to be a very sad, sweet woman. After the test she asked if it would not be a good idea to hold a meeting on the hill for all to see her work. She looked concerned as she went on to say that her visit was limited and that she must return soon.

It was arranged and on the fourth day they held a meeting. The doctor and his wife attended, giving the rest of the people a feeling of encouragement for they had faith in whatever he said.

When all were assembled, the Woman rose, folded her hands, looked up and prayed ardently. Tears of gladness ran over her cheeks as she thanked the Almighty Father for His grace in bringing so many of His children together in love and harmony. Some of them also wept; others would carefully watch each other saying: "My God! She prays like a minister." After prayer she spoke to them of good thought.

"See," she said sadly, "unfortunately, I came to you unannounced. If the dear doctor had known and told you about my mission in advance you all would have received me gladly. In distress, with evil environments, you saw

in me evil. But," she stretched out her arms smilingly and went on, "I came in faith, sent by our Father who is in heaven and on earth and found you, when evil was overcome by my blessing and loving thoughts. A good seed will thrive and it shows you all are good soil. Bless you! Just a misunderstanding creates all evil. We unfortunately judge from our own standpoint; the way we feel, not the way they deserve. Did not Christ, our Master, say, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged?' We build our monuments with stones of kindness."

She laid her hand on Mary's shoulder, saying, "Here is your transmitter, no longer with a board, but just in prayer." She turned out the light and told them the reason; also how she came to bring God's blessing to all. "It was in a circle of this kind when the cross arose and the Voice said to come here. I came in faith and stood your rebuke because I had the patience through the unseen power behind me. You all know, my sisters and brothers, that before even Christ was born, there were prophecies of His coming and He came. Moses went up on Mount Sinai to talk with God and brought back the Ten Commandments, which we all know today. After Moses came from the Mount he was filled with power and by hitting with his stick on the rock he performed the miracle of the water, thus proving to the discontented Israelites the power God gave him that was greater than the golden calf. But Moses went to God in faith, because he loved his people and knew if he appealed the Almighty Power would charge him full of strength to perform and he did. There is not a breath or a sigh in vain, all doings are registered in the Book of Life. You, my friends, would not say things about others in their presence that is underhanded and cowardly. Yet we are never alone. God's breath is always with us, otherwise we could not live. I will prove that to you now although you are seemingly alone with material eye." She then pointed around the room and called by name some of the strangers she had never seen before, and told them of some departed loved one, naming them also. In a natural, simple way she uttered at times dying words of a departing soul, even in their dialect and voice.

She reached each one, then said, "Now we will test the psychic powers of the individuals." She sat down and began to sing, "Nearer My God to Thee," in a very low voice. Soon they all joined. As they sang lights began to flit around. Sometimes between the song one could hear a quick, excited exclamation of, "Oh, my God!" It was when one of the lights would reach toward her face. When they finished singing the Woman explained the meaning of the lights.

"They belong to you," she said, "so divinely arranged that you cannot be offended. Each light is a loved one; the white lights are angels, holy lights. They live in the highest realms. The blue lights are deity. Mothers most have them that have crossed the Mountain of Patience."

The doctor said, "I saw a golden light; it rested on your head."

"It is the light of good deeds; in giving to you, I receive in return from your loved ones departed," she said. "You, doctor," she kept on, "will some day have a golden light, for you are constantly giving to mankind, if you do not harbor too much material gain."

"How is that?" he asked.

"In giving to the sick good cheer, attention, sympathy, as well as medical aid, you get the constant thought of the patient, at times the admiration from the whole family, and those thoughts are golden beams. By each good deed we add a golden vein into our system. Gold radiates, thus causing a wonderful vibration that makes halos around your heads."

"That's a nice way of looking at it," said the doctor, satisfied.

"Oh," said Mary, for the first time, "I saw most wonderful faces with such laughing, beaming eyes."

"Yes," answered the Woman, "that is your band of guides, to shield you, my dear, henceforth. But you must never try to communicate unless in a circle of this kind, where you are materially protected and never open unless in prayer. Evil does not like prayer. It is therefore a wonderful weapon of protection. We are all protected by a shell. If you look toward the sun, you will note at a

distance flitting lights, sometimes near, other times far away. Only spirits divine should open and enter. In distress we tear that shell apart and lose at times our reason, then someone else enters and controls that body mechanism and you are as though in a stupor or dream, roaming about without a hold. Many people who start with spiritualism, and are eager to demonstrate these mysterious powers at a time when they are not protected, invoke the wrong kind of controller—earthdwellers who know not how to elevate. They bring such eager mediums into the asylum.”

“You are right,” said the doctor.

“Now,” continued the instructor, “I wish your friend here,” pointing to the physician, “would sit each week at this hour with you. If he should be detained by a patient, then just sit with him in mind, attending to protect you. And please, no more Ouija Board. It is good enough for a person who has great will power and keeps a certain time that the guides know, to come and protect. I want Mary to write me how you get along and please keep harmony above all, for bad conditions in thought-vibration are like poison in a sitting.”

Anna then spoke of a message Mary once received on the board, about a neighbor getting killed in a barn, and rushing to the place found that very person eating his supper very much alive and happy.

“It was a very low soul; they lie like people just to pass the time, and when the trouble is done they go elsewhere. But if you all pray earnestly and sing, no one but a wholesome guide can administer.” She then closed the meeting, shaking hands with all those who only a few days before meant to burn her at the stake as a witch.

She remained seven days, then returned to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hilbert. Mary carried her suit-case and most of the hill people were at the station waving her a happy journey and to be sure and come back soon, telling her they needed her to teach them more.

“You must find that just as I did,” she called back, with a happy smile and grateful look at them all, as the train pulled out of the station.

It was evening when she arrived at Kenwood. Ronile



On with the feminine banner of intellect, from whose hearts the future generations grow!
—Page 156.

was near the car watching if her mother was there and jumped with joy as she ran toward her.

"Oh, my darling mother, I missed you so," she cried.

"Yes, sweetheart, I was so busy I did not get time to think strong enough to take that longing from you. But I thought strong on the way coming; that is why you are here to meet me."

"Yes," said Ronile, "it is the first time I've come to the car. Did you have a good time, mother, dear?"

"Splendid, and you?"

"Oh, just fine! I taught Victor a new trick, mother."

"My, Mr. Forster must be very much pleased."

"Yes, mother, he gives me flowers every day."

Emma was just coming out of the back door with chicken feed. She dropped it on the steps as she saw the Woman coming along.

"Oh, you wizard, what did you do up there? I am getting letters from everybody raving about you."

"They are not so wild as to rave, Emma," said Mrs. Delien, smiling.

"I mean they are in love with you. Anna writes all the men are wild about you. Yes, you bewitched them."

"Oh, a love divine, not passion," she concluded as she went upstairs to prepare for supper. Coming back to the table she greeted Mr. Hilbert, who was all smiles at her wonderful success as he called it. She took the glass of water and held it up telling each to do the same.

Then Ronile said grace, adding a little more to the usual prayer of "Dear Lord, thank you for bringing mother back safely."

She told all to take three swallows. "Perhaps the divine blessing is still with me and you will all feel the benefit."

After supper she told them that they would sit home on the same evening to give the others, up there in Pensy, strength. Thus the summer passed. Mrs. Hilbert came home, glad to attend the sittings. She told them how it improved all of them and that the doctor was not so busy any more, claiming that the people were healthier, but he did not mind as he was getting too old, anyway. The Judge had less to do but the churches were filled every Sunday.

"My, you ought to keep this work up, it helps mankind so much," said Mrs. Hilbert.

School began and the Woman considered Ronile's chances of advancement; also her own career. She told her friends about her plan of going back to New York, as she must earn money.

"See here," said Mr. Hilbert, "why don't you do that work here? I'll get up a class for you."

"And I'll pass the hat around and do the collecting and, by gosh, the ones that give less than a quarter, I'll stab with a hat pin," said Ruth.

"Same old Ruth," said the Woman laughing. "No, my dear friends, this is soul work, I cannot collect for that. Christ did not and I can't."

"But you earn it," said Mr. Hilbert.

"Well," said the Woman, "if the Master tells me, I will stay." They sat that evening and the Woman received the answer to go, which she did.

CHAPTER XXII

THE POWER OF THE THIRD EYE

Two more years have passed. Ronile was quite a big girl of ten with golden brown curls. She attended school every day. They lived near Central Park, where early in the morning they strolled before breakfast, and after supper hastened down to the pond to feed the ducks, looking very happy. One day Ronile came running home in great excitement, saying a man had followed her.

"What did he look like?" asked the anxious mother.

"Oh, he was short, stubby and wanted to talk to me but I ran fast and went into the house at No. 42 and ran over the roof to No. 6 to lead him wrong."

"That was very clever, dear," said the mother, as she stroked her hair. "Calm yourself, dear, you shall belong to God and me as long as you wish."

Ronile threw her arms around her mother's neck and pleaded, "You would never give me away, mother dear?"

"Never," answered the mother.

Going to the park in the evening they saw a man of that description standing before No. 42. Ronile quickly took her mother's hand and stammered, "There he is!"

"Don't worry, dear, it is only your father's brother. I do not know why they want to waste time watching."

Ronile shivered. It was cold, yet the Woman felt it to be mere nervousness. She walked toward the man, instead of running from him, and asked him what he wanted hanging around that neighborhood.

When he saw the Woman he ran down toward Columbus Avenue, shouting, "We'll get her yet."

The next morning she looked out of the window before Ronile left for school and beheld the two brothers, one on each corner, and an automobile a few houses below in which another man sat, looking over at the house they lived in. Coming back to Ronile, she looked quite pale and told her not to go to school as it was not wise to risk it. Then she telephoned to the teacher explaining Ronile's absence.

The principal told the Woman that a man had been there the day before claiming Ronile, saying he was her father.

"I will take her west," replied the Woman. "Please send her transfer to Chicago," giving her address there.

The principal assured Mrs. Delien of her sympathy and regret at losing such a splendid pupil.

"Well," said the Woman, "we wanted to go for the World's Fair anyway; it takes a long time to make my exhibit."

"I hope to see you there next summer," replied the teacher.

"Just come to the State Normal School. You will find us through that as I will enter Ronile there. Good luck, thank you," answered the Woman, and hanging up the receiver, she clasped Ronile in her arms, saying, "Deary, sunshine and flowers await us; we are going back." She telephoned her address to the different places of business and ordered her reservations at the railroad station. Then they packed for two days, watching with amusement the two men at the corner.

At 10 P. M. she took Ronile along with a well-packed suit-case, and went to Kenwood, telephoning ahead. The snow was too high for an automobile, so they took a car, arriving after midnight. Everybody was up, even Austin, looking at Ronile like one arisen from the grave.

"Gee," he said, "that's like a story when you get kidnapped."

Ruth stood there with both hands resting on her hips, saying, "You just leave her to me. Jack, my feller'll break every bone in his body if he ever gets around here."

"Who is Jack?" asked the Woman.

"Oh, met him at High School. He is head of the baseball team and some beau. I wanted Ronile to come and be flower girl at my wedding," said Ruth, pouting, "and now you are going away."

"Well," said her father, "you are not going to marry yet; your mother needs you."

"We are only going to stay eighteen months, then we will come back," said the Woman. "After a world's fair

it is better to leave as business somehow always slackens up. Anyhow, we are going to get our laurels."

She left Ronile with her friends, and went back to finish up some business.

"Oh, but perhaps they will steal you, mother dear."

"No, my darling, they don't want me or you, either, it is only spite."

Two days later the Hilberts brought Ronile over to the station where they met the Woman.

Ruth said, after kissing her, "Were you afraid we would not bring her?"

"No, I knew you would."

It was time to leave and Mr. Hilbert shaking hands again told the friend not to hesitate if she ever needed anything. "What's ours is yours, you know," he said, as they slowly pulled out of the station to start on the journey toward another end of existence.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHERE SUNSHINE AND GLADNESS COMBINE

In Chicago they had a real good time for a week. Then they took the Golden State Limited, saying in a letter to the folks in Nebraska that they would visit them on the way back. "We take a different route each time on account of geography," she told them. In El Paso they wrote postal cards.

"Land sakes," said Mrs. Hilbert on receiving one of the cards, "we read every day of those savage Mexicans robbing trains. Austin," she called out as he went upstairs to bed, "don't forget to pray for Ronile and her mother."

"All right, ma, I won't, for I want her to come back and bring me a pair of chappes and a real cowboy outfit."

Ronile clapped her hands in glee at the first sight of the orange trees. There were blossoms and fruit—such a difference from what they had left in the East. They stopped a few days in Los Angeles to warm up, as the Woman said, making trips to Hollywood, Laurel Canyon, Beverly Hills and Pasadena. It was all so wonderful! But duty came first, so they went to San Francisco without further delay. The trunks had arrived ahead of them and in claiming them they told the Woman that there were charges of thirty-two dollars and eighty-three cents for excess weight. She said it was not possible as she had paid it all in New York. She looked at her money and saw that she did not have a great deal left. Then she told the agent of the railroad station that she would find her receipt from New York. She could not find the receipt in her purse and thought perhaps she had lost it at the station in New York when she was saying good-by to her friends. She felt that she would not be able to pay five dollars a week for a room if she was forced to pay the extra charges on the trunks. They walked around near a school on Haight Street. The Woman prayed, "Lead Thou Me On." They walked down Webster Street and saw a "For Rent" sign in a window of a house on a sunny corner of the street. They went in and rented the room adjoining the parlor.

"Oh, a piano!" said Ronile.

"Can you play?" asked the nice Spanish landlady.

"May I show you?" asked the eager girl.

"Yes, do," replied the lady. So Ronile sat down and played off two dollars of the rent and herself into the good woman's heart. She told them her folks were out all day and she was lonesome. A child was very welcome as it made the place lively. So they paid ten dollars a month and fifty cents for the dinner each day, Mrs. Delien planning to cook the rest of their meals herself.

"We are getting ready for the fair and hope as soon as I get my trunk to begin and work," said the Woman, "and this sunny room overlooking Twin Peaks and the Mission gave me great courage to begin."

There was Alfred, the son, who went to school. He came home first and then the daughter Frances came home. She was a smiling, sweet girl of eighteen, and they seemed happy to surprise their Dad when he came home. They all sat at the table when he entered.

"Hello, what's this," said he, kissing his women, as he called them.

"Our new members," said Amelia, his wife.

"I did not know you had a sign out, woman?" said the frank westerner.

"Well, it wasn't out two minutes, when they came in and took the room," said the wife.

"We liked you and the piano," said Ronile.

"Well, I hope you will like us all," remarked Mr. Lesser, "for since Frances has grown up, we have missed having a little girl around."

When he sat down to eat Ronile folded her hands and said grace. First they were all startled, then bowed their heads, listening to this strange little girl praying. It was not customary for them to do so. After she had finished, she began to eat the delicious tuna salad, saying, "I like that too," then looking around the table she said, "I love you all, you are such nice people."

During the dinner the Woman told Mr. Lesser about the extra charges on her trunks and that she could not find the receipt for the money she had paid in the east.

"I'll pray to St. Anthony, mother, he will help us!" said Ronile, with a wistful look.

After dinner Ronile went and brought back the heavy winter coat belonging to her mother, and reaching into the pocket she found the receipt.

"See, here it is," she cried. "You are good luck to us," said Ronile, meaning the Lesser family.

Next morning, they went to order the trunks brought to the house. They had to look around as other baggage was piled in front. Ronile climbed over some but could not find them. One of the men said, "They have been put into the other building."

Going up the steps Ronile slipped and fell on the floor crying about her leg. The mother picked her up and saw a large wound on the shin cut deep into the bone. The sight of the wound robbed her of her senses and she fell back in a faint. An express wagon was called, on which the mother and child were loaded and they were taken to the Emergency Hospital, where they were given attention.

In the evening when Mr. Lesser came home he looked around for Ronile, and not seeing her he ran into the kitchen with an alarmed expression, saying: "I knew it, Molly! If I didn't think it was our little woman and girlie that Jim was telling me about getting hurt this morning."

Mrs. Lesser dropped the cooking spoon and grabbed her husband by the shoulder, crying: "What! You mean they were hurt? No wonder I was so nervous all day. I just could not get away from the window and every jitney that came up the hill I felt they must be in. Oh, my God! Where are they?"

"Now, see here, woman, it ain't goin' to help them or you to whine around," patting his wife gently on the cheek, then ran to the phone, calling out, "Oh, ma, where are the nickels or slugs for that phone?"

There was quite a tumult in the Lesser household. Alfred reproached his mother for not buying him the bicycle he had wanted, saying, "I could spin around to the different hospitals in a jiffy."

"Yes," said Frances, choking down a sob, "and break your neck, up and down these hills."

After pushing the third nickel in the slot, Mr. Lesser came over hastily reaching for his coat, saying, "They are in the German Hospital right up here. So long," as he hastily went toward the door; "hold the dinner, woman, I'll be back soon."

Alfred looked a minute, then ran after his father, saying, "I can't eat now; no use staying home, anyway," he mumbled to himself as he hastened to catch up with his father, "dinner wouldn't taste the same. I just love to watch that kid pray before she eats."

At Dubois Avenue, Alfred reached his father. They walked hastily up the hill, each one busy with his own thoughts. Thus they arrived almost breathless at the hospital where they were led into a ward, toward the end of which they beheld a woman sitting at the bedside of a sleeping child. Her eyes were cast out of the window into space. Her face was very white. The nurse told the visitors that the Woman had sat there in the same position for hours, but that the little girl was doing very nicely and was rapidly recovering from the effects of the ether.

Mr. Lesser touched the Woman gently on the shoulder, saying, trying to hide the husky feeling in his throat which arose at the sight of his pale little friend who had just come into their household by divine law, "Now that's the way you try to play hooky on Molly's dinner, by getting into another boarding house."

Alfred stood gazing at the sleeping little friend who seemed to turn slightly at the sound of Mr. Lesser's voice.

"Papa don't talk so loud, you will wake her up," whispered the boy to his father.

The Woman laid her hand on Mr. Lesser's hand as he stroked her shoulder, and turning to him she looked him full in the face, saying, "I wanted to call you up but did not know it was so late."

"Is her leg broken?"

"I hardly think so, Mr. Lesser, but—" the Woman held her hands over her face and shivered, then pointing to Ronile she stammered, with dry lips, "There was such a deep hole in the bone."

"Oh," said he, with an easier feeling, "if the bone

is not broken, I'll carry her right home." He turned to his son and told him to go right home and tell his mother to get the folding bed down.

Alfred looked once more toward Ronile, who slowly opened her eyes, trying to collect herself, then she returned the smile of her new friend, who stooped over her saying, "Want to come home, honey?"

Ronile looked around and saw the big, good man, then her mother and the different beds, then reached out her arms to him.

He bent over and patted her hands, saying: "I knew she wanted me to carry her home. Won't we surprise Frances and Molly if I bring you right in on them?"

"Can you?" asked the Woman with a hopeful look in her eyes.

"Can I?" he answered, assuredly, then turning he went to the office and soon came back with the doctor, talking eagerly.

"All right," said the latter, "if it isn't far I can come down and dress the wound every day."

Mr. Lesser looked at the Woman with a victorious smile, saying: "Can I? Well, I should say so, the less that child sees of the hospital the better off she is," then turning he called to the nurse, "Hurry up and take your time. I don't want to hurry you but my woman is waiting with dinner and a darn bad dinner it would be if we had to eat alone, knowing these two were in the hospital. Well, as long as no bones are broken, it is all right."

Soon he held Ronile in his strong arms and hastily carried her down the hill, telling the mother to hang on to his arm; that he could carry her, too. When they reached the house Mrs. Lesser was waiting at the door. She ran toward the Woman and kissed her, then led her up the stairs. Mr. Lesser placed Ronile gently on the bed and told her to sleep, as the doctor had said food was not to be given her that day. Frances brought in some of her toys and placed them on the side of the bed. Then all went into the dining room to eat their dinner.

Ronile's prayer seemed still to linger for each one looked at the other. The Woman knew what they were

thinking about so she made a grateful prayer of thanksgiving—not from a book but from a mother's heart for she felt it was the Father's hand which so wisely led her to this humble circle of His children. Frances wanted to ask Mrs. Delien how Ronile happened to get hurt, but the father's warning look told her not to remind the stricken mother.

"This is no time to go over rips and tears, this is feeding time. What do we care about this morning and its woes, which might have been lots worse?" he said, and in an effort to change the subject turned to his wife, saying, "Molly, where did you get the dandy fish? It is fine." He knew he could benefit the Woman more by praising the food than by condemning fate with bitter reproaches.

"Gee," said Alfred, "you've got an extra dish, ma."

"Well, we get fifty cents extra for dinner, that gives us a dainty dessert," replied his mother.

"Oh," said Alfred, "why do they have the best things last? If I had my way I'd eat the dessert first for that always tastes the best."

"Yes, and your pimples would look better, too," said his mother. "Just look at his nose; he's been picking at it again."

"Well, how can I get rid of the old blackheads if I don't pinch them out?"

"You can," said Mrs. Delien. "Before you retire take good warm water with a little bicarbonate of soda dissolved in it and a good castile soap. Wash your face well, using plenty of soap, and rinse with cold water. If you do this every night and morning you will soon get rid of them."

"I will do it; will it make hair grow on my face?" and bending over his sister he rubbed his cheek briskly over her face.

She slapped him in a playful way, saying, "Your face is getting like a scrubbing brush."

"That means a razor, pa," he said laughingly.

"Don't be too anxious, boy, it's a lifetime job when you once start, so hold off these stubs as long as you can," replied his father.

CHAPTER XXIV

WHERE LAUGHTER RINGS CLEARER THAN GOLD

A ring from the door bell broke up the laughing party. Alfred announced an old gentleman who wished to speak to Mrs. Delien. The Woman went into the living room and found herself confronted by Mr. Bartells. He still held his hat in his hand and was looking into the adjoining room, watching Ronile as she lay fast asleep. At the Woman's approach he turned swiftly around and grasped her hand raising it tenderly to his lips. Then he looked at her, saying half-sympathetically, "You did come back!"

The Woman pointed to a Morris chair, and said, "Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, but, my dear child," he addressed her, as he looked admiringly at her slender form, "what is it I read in the evening paper about your getting hurt?"

"Ronile was hurt," answered the Woman, as she calmly pointed to the adjoining room.

"I was trying hard to find you. My first visit was to the Emergency Hospital, then they told me you were at the German Hospital. But tell me, my dear, how did you come to this common place to live?"

"Why, Mr. Bartells, this is a Godsend. They are wonderful people! We could not find better ones in the whole world."

"I must differ with your taste. I would have thought your high ideals at any rate would have led you to a place where the people would not have been quite so uncouth."

"Oh, there is sunshine within, and besides I could not afford a more luxurious place. However, this looks golden to me, as I need the smiles of these people. They are workers; so am I."

"Precisely the right kind of soil to plant yourself in," and saying this he glanced over to the piano and pointing to a rag time piece of music, asked sarcastically, "Do you intend to educate your daughter on the Rag Time Road?"

"Not exactly, but if Ronile develops as good a heart

and disposition, I will feel that her education is not a failure." He shook his head sadly and looking toward Ronile he said: "Poor dear little Princess. It would be a great pleasure to me if I could do something for you or Ronile. I wanted to secure a private room which would have been more pleasant for the sick child." He arose and walked into the sick room and fondly stroked the hair of the sleeping patient.

He watched her pensively and then returned, saying, "How big and beautiful she has grown, and to think she is compelled to live in such a place."

"We are happy here; that is one thing you cannot buy; it must come. Therefore we see a perfect paradise here."

"New York must have treated you unkindly, as you are contented with so little."

"I cannot say that a city could treat one unkindly, but through sorrow our soul grows and our body does not require much to stimulate happiness."

He looked at her appealingly and stretching his hands toward her he said: "I waited for you, my dear, and knew you would come back to me. It grieves me greatly that you should look for a place of this kind when I live so near and am willing to open the innermost door of my heart to you."

"But," said the Woman, half hoping, "with all of us?"

"Who is all?" he asked.

"Oh, I have grown spiritually and we are a large band now and cannot be separated. If you want the flesh you must make room for the spirit."

He jumped up from his seat and said, half alarmed: "I am afraid, my dear, that deprivation has caused you to be slightly unbalanced. Let me help you! If it takes my last dollar I would spend it to cure you of those horrible ideas of dealing with something that is not."

"What would you do if I let you take care of me?" she asked, smilingly.

He paced the floor, then stopped in front of her, saying: "I would put you in one of the finest sanitariums

until your nerves were healed. Then take you home and have a daily whist party all by ourselves."

"Well," said the Woman, "it is indeed my good fortune that I am not ready to be led by the command of your dollars to an institute for helpless masses of degenerates who must resort to such confinement because they lack will power. And that is the best you could do for me! Eventually, I would be molded to conform to your ideas and my days of activity would be limited to a game of cards." She sprang to her full height and looking him squarely in the face, said: "I thank you for your interest in us but we prefer a poor but free life. I will confine myself to the competition among the workers in art and seek a price, a world's reward. Therefore, dear Mr. Bartells, I am very busy, indeed, and do not require your kind assistance in leading me to an asylum."

He arose heavily and taking up his hat, bowed and moved toward the door, saying: "I am very sorry to have kept you from your friends, pray forgive me. I shall see that I don't bother you in the future."

Ronile called for a drink of water and when her mother brought it, she said: "Oh, my dear, good mama, I am so glad that he has gone. I wanted a drink before, but was afraid to ask you for fear he would come in and tickle me with his beard. I would not like it today, mother dear," she shuddered as she handed the glass back to her mother.

"Don't you like him?" asked the Woman.

"No, I don't want to hate him but I can't help it. He just makes me feel as if he wants to catch a lovely wild bird and keep it under a net to look at."

"You are right, dear," replied her mother, "we will try hard to get along without him. If he wants to do some good, why doesn't he, but he just demands our souls, and they don't belong to us. They are God's property given to guide us and we shall please God at all times." Here she stooped down kissing the pale lips which still smelled from the ether. "See, dear, God tests us; it means wealth or faith. If Mr. Bartells could only see how wealthy we

are in finding such good people that seem to love us already."

There was a slight knock on the door, which the Woman answered by calling out, "Come in." The door flew open and there stood the whole Lesser family each holding on to the other's shoulders, as they marched in the room singing. They stood around the bed laughing just to see if Ronile had forgotten her laugh.

Alfred came over to the Woman and asked: "Do you know that old guy? Gee, he is rich! But, say, stingy? He wouldn't go out after dark for fear some one would hit him over the head. I know the son of his manager, and when they got twins he roasted the poor father for enlarging his family with such speed, as he could not pay the salary they would need to feed them. Remember, ma, when I told you Christmas he did not give the man a penny for the kids? Some stiff!"

"Yes," said Mr. Lesser, "he has not much good from his wealth, not even the good things such as Molly cooks for us. What do we care for money? I bet he is the loneliest man in town."

Looking at Ronile he cried out, "Hello, there, my pal, all better? When you can sit up in a chair I will tell you all about the bears in Alaska."

"I can sit up now, Mr. Lesser, if you want me to," said Ronile eagerly. "I would love to hear about the dear little bears. Why, I had a big bear in the Bronx Park trained. He would sit up for me and do lots of tricks."

They all sat around the bed listening to Mr. Lesser's talk about Alaska, where he had been sent to make surveys, and had taken his family with him. The Woman compared a game of cards to this happy group, then sighed wearily.

On hearing this, Mrs. Lesser got up and pushed her family out, saying, "It is time to leave, the poor Woman should be asleep."

It was five weeks before Ronile could walk well enough to go to school. She sat by her mother twisting silk leaves onto little wires, then she would begin to make buttercups and forget-me-nots. Every evening the folks would look over the flowers they had made during the day.

Mr. Lesser never came home without bringing some little token, saying awkwardly, as he handed the toy to Ronile, "Oh, see what I found!" One day he brought her a miniature bale of cotton. "See, some old nigger mammy tied this up," and made a big story of how hard it was for him to get it.

"Oh, you did not have to hurt anyone for it?" said Ronile alarmed. "I don't think I could care for it if that was the case."

"No," said he, "not so bad." He pulled a dime out of his pocket and assured the mother that the bale of cotton had only cost ten cents.

One evening Ronile had the hiccoughs from laughing.

Mr. Lesser went out to his Molly, saying, "Woman, do you know a way to stop that youngster from hiccoughing?"

"Sure," said Amelia, and she walked in to Ronile, saying quite concerned: "I know you will be angry with me. I only thought after it was gone how much you loved it, but it's gone and I don't know how to get another."

"What?" cried Ronile in dismay.

"Your bale of cotton; I threw it away," answered Mrs. Lesser.

Mr. Lesser thundered at his wife, asking her what right she had to throw away what he had fought for from a poor old colored lady. The fright caused by Mr. Lesser's pretended anger stopped Ronile's hiccoughs and soon Mr. Lesser came back with the little bundle, saying he had to beat up the scavenger to get it back.

Ronile took the bale of cotton and tucked it away, saying, "I had better keep you out of sight if the poor people get beaten up just on account of a dear little bale of cotton," but it helped to stop the hiccoughs.

After two months of hard work the Woman had finished her basket for the great, magnificent World's Fair. There were all kinds of flowers in a huge gilded French basket. She had a glass case made and lined with a wisteria shade of chiffon. On the draping she put wreaths of pansies, empire style. Then two weeks before the great gates opened she went to the officials with her flowers. They sent her to the Arts and Crafts Section, referring her

to a Mr. Angerson. He, however, gave her little encouragement, saying the space would cost at least one hundred dollars.

"But they tell me the space is free," said the Woman, with a worried expression, "and it is a credit to San Francisco, as I make them here."

Mr. Angerson put the Woman off for ten days. She went from one official to another, every day paying out sixty cents for carfare and admission to the exposition grounds, and her funds were getting very low, but the good people told her not to worry about the rent and board until she got on her feet.

"Oh, Father, do not leave me now," she prayed.

One day she went to the California Building, but was told that silk flowers belonged in the Fine Arts. She went there and was told that only paintings belonged there. She went to the French Building, which was not completed, but was told that only gowns would be displayed there. Another day she went to the Liberal Arts Building. She walked past Leichner's Exhibit and asked the young lady in that section if she could not take in the basket of flowers.

"Yes, we can, but the goods must be imported," she replied.

"Well, I can prove to you with labels that most of my material will comply with that demand. Come and see me and assure yourself," said the Woman.

"I will," replied the other. "Being an exhibitor, have you a pass?"

"No, if they only knew how hard it is for me to pay the admission each day, they would give me a pass."

The good girl went with her and secured a permit for her, thus saving her fifty cents a day.

The next evening, Miss Hybenth came to see the basket of flowers. She clasped her hands in astonishment as she viewed the basket, saying, "This is a masterpiece."

"Yes," said the Woman, "and I had to go to a for-eigner to help me out."

"You see," said Miss Hybenth, "they all go abroad to finish art, as this country is too young and vigorous to content itself in studying the finer lines of art. But you

wait, I will see that you get a space of your own. It will not cost you much as your exhibit is small and will not take over five square feet of space." Thus it was arranged that at the opening, the whole Lesser family accompanied Mrs. Delien and Ronile to the great Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

When they came down Fillmore Street, Ronile clasped her hands in delight. "A Fairyland," she cried.

"My, such a sight! I am glad I waited for the opening day," said Mr. Lesser, "it would have been just like tasting pie crust before it was baked. This is sure the prettiest sight I ever saw."

They first visited the Liberal Arts Building, to see the basket of flowers, and stood a long time lost in thought. Then seeing how the crowd came over admiring the wonderful display, Mr. Lesser retreated and drank in with great satisfaction the different remarks about such work. Once in a while, if he caught the eye of an admirer he would point with this thumb toward the Woman, priding himself that he knew her and that she was living with them.

A few weeks later a space was made for the basket in the Varied Industries Building. It had a wonderful display between the Marienthaler China Section and the Lion & Weismueller Jewelry.

One Sunday as the Woman entered she beheld Mr. Bartells standing before the glass case, lost in thought and stroking his beard as he carefully studied every detail of the work. There were large crowds admiring the flowers; some thought they were made of china, others from wax. Another woman thought they were made of butter. Mr. Bartells smiled, amused, but did not say from what material. He rather enjoyed their puzzled views. "Oh, dear," said a newcomer. "How wonderfully those flowers have kept. Every time I come I have to look at the gorgeous creation."

"And the dewdrops get me," said her husband. Pointing to a fuchsia he said, "That's my favorite; just see how the drop seems to roll off and yet it hangs in the same place all the time."

Mrs. Delien came forth and greeted the crowd, telling

them that the flowers were all made of silk and chiffon, and that the dewdrops were rhinestones.

"Some clever work," said the men, "wonderful! You must live in a palace."

The Woman turned and saw Mr. Bartells, who felt quite safely concealed in the crowd, then she said: "No, my friends, if I had chosen a palace I would today sit in a sanitarium, just because this power to give is within me. It is a little garden where these flowers grow, but well cared for by love of God and good-will to men." She looked around but Mr. Bartells had vanished.

"Oh, I struck the nail on the head," she thought.

All week the Woman worked to supply the stores. On Sundays they went to the Fair.

"What's your hurry today? We are not ready; wait for us," said Mr. Lesser.

"No," said the Woman, "I can't. I feel as if Beachy, the aviator, were going to get hurt and if I get there soon enough, perhaps through concentration I can help him." As they came to the hill at Fillmore Street they beheld Beachy already up in a new Taube. The Woman's heart began to beat faster and she rushed through the gates. Ronile saw the doctor who had dressed her wound and called him over.

"Oh, doctor," said Mrs. Delien, "go toward the wharf; you will be needed," and taking Ronile's hand she hastily walked along looking up at times as they neared the wharf.

There were thousands of people watching the thrilling flight, when suddenly a cry of "Look out!" burst forth from the crowd, as they looked up and saw one wing fall down. The aviator seemed to see the danger of falling on the closely packed crowd. He steered the machine toward the Bay and fell like a bird that had a wing shot off. Reaching the Bay the Woman begged to be taken out to help him, but the men thought she was hysterical. One hour later they found the dead aviator at the exact place she had pointed out.

In the evening Mr. Lesser said, "Funny how you could feel that accident before it happened."

"Some people do," said the Woman simply. She felt

that in his home she need not tell of the power she gained by self-denial. "They are good loving people, so I like them," she thought.

One evening Miss Hybenth came with a mysterious look on her face. She kissed Ronile and the Woman, then said, "I have good news for you."

"Oh, tell me," said Ronile eagerly. A weakness overcame the Woman, as she sat down. There had not been many visitors in her life who came, saying, "I have good news for you."

She folded her hands and waited patiently, rather enjoying the suspense. Miss Hybenth went to the piano and struck the great notes, and with full contralto voice she sang, "Grosser Gott wier loben dich, Herr wier preisen deine Staerke (Great God, we worship Thee, we praise Thy power)."

The Lessers came rushing in. "What's up?" asked the boss of the house.

"Friends," cried the visitor, "your little boarder was awarded a high honor in the Book of Art, a Gold medal."

The Woman grew pale, tears were rolling down her cheeks.

A big hand grasped hers and held them both in his, saying, "Little Woman, that medal found the right place, you deserve it and I am proud of you." There were kisses coming from all sides, even Alfred wiped his mouth on his sleeve before he paid his tribute to the Woman.

Miss Hybenth was requested to play more folk-songs, but the Woman asked for classic pieces, saying, "It is war-time and we can be just as happy by having something that will not arouse someone's antagonism."

On leaving, the German girl asked the Woman to be sure and come to the Fair the next day as they wanted to see her.

"Well, there's a happy girl," said Mr. Lesser. "She's well educated."

"Yes, she can speak five languages," said Ronile, stopping to rub her sleepy eyes.

"I can swear in two," said the boss.

"And pray in none," put in his wife.

"He smiles all the time, and that is as good or better sometimes," said the Woman as she bid them good night.

The next day being Saturday there was no school for Ronile. Mrs. Delien dressed her up in her net party dress with the silk slip. She herself put on a white Charmeuse silk dress and white hat trimmed with feathers, white pumps and stockings. A bunch of mixed flowers was the only color visible. As they entered the gate there was a leap in the Woman's heart she had not felt since she boarded the ship on her honeymoon trip to Saratoga. A door seemed to open then to a new life, a veil lifted the girlish brow and gave it a passport to the road of maternity.

"Oh, what a stormy path it was," she thought.

Ronile spoke about something which awoke her from the past and grasped the hand that now held her arm, for Ronile was almost to her mother's shoulder.

"Oh," thought the Woman, "for Ronile, I would face that road again." By this time they were up to the great entrance of the Varied Industries Building. As they entered Miss Hybenth presented her with a large bouquet of American Beauty roses. On the top of her basket of silk flowers was a blue ribbon. All the good people of the German Section came and congratulated her and some of the enthusiastic young men grabbed her and carried her around. A banquet was served at the old Heidelberg Inn in the Zone. Ronile clasped her hands as she sat at the beautifully decorated table and silently mumbled her prayer. A look of appreciation reached the girl from the eyes of the mother which said so much and Ronile understood.

"What are you doing?" asked Erich Von Pelten, as he saw Ronile in silent meditation.

She looked up at him and said, "I just asked the Lord to bless this food and its giver."

"Well," said Erich, "the Lord will bless a big, bad bunch." He stood up and took his glass, the rest following his example, except Ronile and her mother. They drank to the health and prosperity of the new artist.

"Why don't you stand up?" asked Henry von Reel,

another youth as he held his glass toward the little lady.

"Well, I helped to make the flowers, too, and that is why I don't want to shout."

"You are right, dear," said Miss Hybenth, and turning to the gentlemen she said that all the forget-me-nots, buttercups and lilies of the valley in the basket had been made by those small hands.

"Well," said Ronile, "we did not have much money and mother wept most every day when we were alone because we did not know how to pay for the glass case or get room for the basket to stand on."

"That is why the tears glitter as they roll over the flowers when you look at the basket," said Doctor Edel, who was exhibiting radium and some curios from the South Sea Islands.

"It is rather peculiar that every time I look at the flowers a sadness comes over me," said another member of the party, and turning to the flower-maker he said, "Madam, why do you work such sad vibrations into that garden of yours?"

"It is their preservation; they keep better it seems. Each flower that blooms bears a dewdrop in its cup."

"Then you were bound to compete with Nature and you rivaled her very well," said Doctor Edel.

"You know that the Jury of Awards placed the exhibit of the flowers in the Palace of Horticulture," remarked Miss Hybenth.

"Then they agreed that it was part of nature," said Erich happily. Here he looked at the Woman, this handsome blonde youth with keen blue eyes, and taking his glass to his lips drank its full contents with meaning eyes bent on the flower-maker.

Then he smacked his lips and sang, "My Heart is a Beehive."

"You said it," laughed Mrs. Delien.

From the tower of the building came the sound of a trumpet. A girl dressed in a Hussar costume stood blowing from "The Trumpeter von Saeckingen," "Es ist im Leben haesslich, eingerichtet, das bei den Rosen gleich die

dornen bluehen." (It is a sad arrangement in this life, that thorns grow where the roses bloom.)

"That's a lie," said Erich, "since madam's creation; there are no thorns on her roses."

"Yes, but the wires often get into our fingers and make them bleed," said Ronile.

"But we try to cover them well so they don't stick the purchaser," said her mother, smiling.

As the last great sounds thrilled through the air, "Behuet dich Gott es waer so schoen gewesen, behuet dich Gott es hall nicht sollen sein," the party got up to dance. They asked Mrs. Delien to join them, but she declined, saying that it had been so many years since she had danced she was afraid she did not know how, but Ronile danced. She felt quite big as she passed her mother with flushed cheeks.

The mother smiled encouragingly, and thought, "Well, my dear, if I can keep a cloud from your future life, I will prevent it as your childhood road was too stony for your tender feet."

After dinner they took in the sights on the Zone.

"My, what a difference between today and last Sunday," said Ronile. "Then we had no money and just walked until we were so tired. If we had a fine time like today every day, wouldn't it be grand?"

"No, my sweet little girl, you would be very tired of that," said her mother. "Joy is very filling and causes indigestion so easily. However, this was the grandest day that I can remember. Just think, of all the ladies you see, there are perhaps not one in a thousand who received a Gold Medal."

As the sun was going down they parted, blessing that party of people who were so nice and kind.

When they reached home they heard Frances playing and her father with his impossible voice singing, "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea."

As they went in, he shouted, "Oh, Molly, they're here!" Then he led them into the dining room.

"Now, daddy," said Frances, "you make me sick, you spoiled it all; that's no surprise!"

But it was. The good hearted man could not wait any longer.

"Why," said he, "if it took much longer I'd bust," and there was another dinner party waiting, and Molly Lesser did her best to bring out her culinary ability. A home-made shortcake was placed in the center of the table, on which the words "Good Luck" had been written with equal sized berries, and a pretty arrangement of flowers and fern leaves peeping out from under the cake.

"This is very pretty," said the Woman, "I don't know how we are ever going to repay you."

"Well," said the boss, "if you knew how hard it was to get these things," pointing to the red carnations and ferns, "why, I had an awful time," looking mischievously at Ronile, as he soberly went on, "You know, I just had to break down a fence and smash the fellow, but I got my way all right."

"You could not hurt a fly," said Ronile.

"Why, one time I gave Jimmy an awful thrashing because he was hopping from one plate to another eating all the lettuce."

"You could not whip poor, dear little canary bird; could he, Jimmy?" said Ronile, as she walked over to the cage, where the little fellow was chirping gleefully. Then Mrs. Lesser came in and they sat down to eat once more. No wine was served, but a ripple of laughter filled the place.

When they served the duck Mr. Lesser put on a sad expression, as he said: "Oh, how hard I tried to get you! Do you know, Ronile, this was the wildest sea-gull in Alameda? Two men were after her and I had to thrash them senseless to get her. I hope they didn't drown, but I could not wait to see as Molly had to have the bird for dinner."

"Do you thrash everything before you eat it?" asked Ronile, who by this time was getting on to his thrashing stories.

"Don't you?" he asked her.

"No, I could not," answered Ronile with a pout.

"Yes, you do; you have the bird's poor little heart in your mouth now and are thrashing it between your teeth."

"Now, papa, stop," said Mrs. Lesser, "you will spoil the poor young one's appetite, she is almost choking now."

Ronile begged permission to leave the table, as she could not swallow the heart of the duck, and Pa Lesser felt very badly, saying, "She is an awful sensitive kid; got to be careful what you say."

"Well," said Mrs. Delien, "she really is not hungry; too many good things all day. Her stomach is only used to one big meal a day and she really has had enough."

"Oh, but my nice cake!" said Amelia.

"I'll come back for some of that," came a voice out of the living room, which made Mr. Lesser feel happy again.

He helped clear off the meat, saying, "She must not see any of it; reminding her would spoil her appetite for the cake."

Alfred called for a second piece, saying, as he threw out his chest and pushed back his curly hair, his big brown eyes gleaming: "Gee, if you only got a gold medal every day. I hope you will stay here always."

A sad look came into the eyes of the Woman as she shook her head slowly, saying, "My good people, I know it will be only a short time before we must part, not as friends, but from your home."

Here she looked at Frances who was casting her eyes down on her plate, avoiding the Woman's gaze. "You will have a surprise here and we must make room. A new member will claim our share of your splendid cooking, my dear Mrs. Lesser."

"What do you mean?" asked the hostess.

"Well, Frances will come home married some day, and I know you could not let your sweet little girl live apart from you, could you? Too bad Lester is not here so that we could celebrate the engagement," continued Mrs. Delien.

"You are wrong there," said the boss, "my Frances has been having beaux since she was fifteen years old and she is too happy with her ma and pa."

"Frances," said her mother, "you must tell me, dear, if you are thinking of getting married. I want you to be happy, but you are young yet; enjoy your life while you

can, but don't marry on the sly; I could not stand it. I don't object to your choice, no matter who it is."

This was too much for Frances, and she leaned over burying her face on her mother's shoulder, sobbing out that she and Lester had been married that afternoon, and that he was coming later.

Mrs. Lesser pushed Frances aside angrily. "You have deceived me, baby!" she cried, "and I could not even make a wedding dress for you. Oh, Frances! why did you do that?"

"Well," sobbed the young bride, "they all do it; we wanted to keep it a secret until we had money enough saved, then tell you, mama, and then have a w-wedding."

Mr. Lesser was stunned for a while, but his good nature mastered the situation.

He grabbed his little girl, as he called her, and sat her on his lap, stroking her head, saying: "You never did any harm to anyone in all your life and now you just run after your poor little heart you lost. You are the greatest sufferer, if you lose."

"Oh, no," said Molly, blowing her nose, "why it seems only yesterday that she was a baby and now she leaves me. This is the saddest thing in all my l-i-fe."

"Tut, tut, now," said the boss, "you did the same thing, Molly. Didn't we run away? And we never regretted it. And I don't know—that boy, Lester, seems all right. He works for an insurance company; that is a good job; busy all the time."

Alfred stretched himself lazily, saying: "Never mind, Frances, I'll do the same some day."

"Don't you begin now," said his father impatiently, "you are not even dry behind your ears."

The bell rang and in came the new bridegroom. He stopped short at the threshold when he saw the mother of the girl in tears.

His joyous, "hello," ended in a vexed look, and biting his lips he stood still until his father-in-law said, "Come in, my boy." But the heart-broken mother passed him and went weeping to her room.

Mr. Lesser motioned him to sit down, then said: "No use crying over spilled milk, but you should have made

a clean breast of it like a man. You know that mother of Frances has a claim on her. She needed time to think about a separation between them. This is too quick; it is like stealing something valuable that grew from a mother's heart. You must remember that she belongs to you now, and we have no more claim upon her." He pushed the girl toward her young husband.

A tear ran down his cheek as he said, "Now remember, the first complaint I get from my little girl, I'll thrash the daylights out of you. I mean it!"

Ronile glanced quickly at her mother, as if to say, "He will thrash him all right." Frances borrowed the suit-case from Mrs. Delien in which they packed some necessary articles of clothing, then went to the door of the weeping mother, but she would not see them.

"Well," said the father, "women do get to be hyenas when they get into a temper. Just go and be good, and God bless you, my little girl, and come and have dinner tomorrow," he said in a husky voice.

"I thought as I would get my vacation soon that we would take a trip to Los Angeles," said Lester.

"Go as far as you like, but bring her back safe, and say," he called after them, "if you don't leave town, why come and have your dinners here."

"All right, daddy," said Frances, running back to hug and kiss her father again.

The Woman had given Ronile some rice and they threw it after them as they walked off on their honeymoon.

While Molly was still weeping, they washed the dishes and Mr. Lesser said to Mrs. Delien, "How is it you could feel Frances was going to get married?"

"Well," she said with a far-off look, "I saw Frances in a wedding ring reaching from her over to the cake, but I am so sorry I spoke of it."

"Oh, no, I am glad you did; it would not be real to have a married couple apart; let them shift for themselves, as long as they stay in the same town."

The next morning Mrs. Lesser was quite consoled, saying, "It is all right, if she would only come home, for I never even taught her how to make a cup of coffee."

"Well," said Mr. Lesser, as he finished his coffee and rose to go, "Frances won't need to make coffee today or tomorrow. If I understand right, she expects to continue her office work"; then he glanced at the Woman with a worried look in his eyes, who knew what he meant to say.

"Yes, I told you at the dinner table that we would have to make room," said the Woman.

"Can't we move to a larger place and stay together?"

"It would hardly be wise," advised the Woman, "you must first see how you get along with your new son-in-law, for remember you will for a time see in him the intruder. If you get over the trial of his owning Frances, all will be well with you. So try first to see if you can take him to your heart as a son. I know you can for you are just the dearest little mother, and you will love him just because he loves your daughter." Here she kissed the dear mother and said, "I will go out and see if there is something to be found in the way of a new boarding place for Ronile and myself."

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Lesser, "not so soon. Please don't pile everything on me; let me get used to one thing first; wait at least until tomorrow, for it is Sunday and we know you don't like to do those things on the Sabbath."

It was six o'clock on Sunday when Mrs. Delien and Ronile returned from the Fair. They heard singing and merry laughing as they came down the hill.

"Ah! Frances is home," said Ronile. "I am so glad, mother, for Mrs. Lesser's sake, and sorry for ourselves, deary."

"It is time for us to leave."

"Now my good days are over," sighed Ronile, "but, mother, perhaps I can go to Mrs. Lesser's every day and practice." The Woman looked around for a place to move. "Now, don't spoil the end of a happy day," said Ronile. "Tomorrow will be time enough, and I want to see Frances, for when we have moved we cannot see them so often."

Coming in, Frances greeted them happily. "Oh, you darling, I am so glad you broke the ice. Mama is fully

consoled, and say—she looked all day to find a place for you.”

“Oh, why did she do that?” asked Mrs. Delien.

“Well, she wanted to see you get a place where you will be happy; she doesn’t like the landlady but you can keep that to yourself.”

CHAPTER XXV

WHERE ONE TONGUE LIGHTS MANY FIRES OF HELL

Early next morning Mrs. Lesser and the Woman went just one block away and looked at the chosen place.

"I like the room," said Mrs. Delien, with a sigh. "But, oh," she thought, "what a difference in these two women!" sizing up Mrs. Lesser and Mrs. Paine. The new landlady had a larger corner apartment and rented the different rooms, keeping the kitchen and dining-room for herself. There was a storeroom facing the hall that she made into a kitchenette.

"This is your apartment," said Mrs. Paine. "The other roomers do not keep house; they work all day. There is one young lady," she said, "who comes home at all hours of the night."

"But," said Mrs. Delien, with a vague feeling, "perhaps she is good; late hours don't indicate that people are bad."

"Well," said the new landlady, "there is something fishy about that one; just keep a watch on her." Here she took out a skeleton key and opened the door of a neatly arranged room. "See these Chinese things, they look bad to me; where does she get them?" She slapped her hands together as she spoke, a vicious look coming into her eyes. Her fat face was covered with big drops of perspiration as she excitedly tried to paint a black cloak around a poor working girl.

The Woman did not enter the room, but Mrs. Paine called, "Why don't you come in?"

"I can't, the owner is not here. If she were here to invite me, I would gladly go in, for I like the atmosphere the room conceals."

"I own this place!" said the landlady stoutly.

"But," said Mrs. Delien with great meaning, "you sublet this room for a price, just as you rent the apartment from the landlord. You don't allow the owner of

this house to come in every day and show your place to strangers."

"I guess not!" replied Mrs. Paine.

"Well, then," said the other, "it is not fair to the young lady to show her home to absolute strangers."

"But you are going to live here," protested Mrs. Paine with coarse positiveness, "and you may as well know with whom you are living; and take care, she might lead you into something."

"I am afraid, Mrs. Paine, that you worry too much about other people's affairs. If I rent this room," she said decidedly, "I will keep private for I am very busy."

"Oh, dear, I don't know; do you really want it?" asked Mrs. Lesser.

"Yes, I will take it," and she paid the rent. She did not like the place but knew that the good Mrs. Lesser had looked all around for a place and surely took the best. "The room suits me. It has four windows facing the east; that means a lot to me."

Mrs. Paine saw that she did not gain anything by "knocking" the tenants to the newcomer, but she wanted to rent her room and got two dollars more than she had been asking, thinking that they would Jew her down, which they did not and she was pleased. But in her evil mind she wondered why Mrs. Lesser was helping the Woman to get a new place.

"Is she that bad?" she thought. "I'll find out." Thus she addressed Mrs. Lesser who was going to follow her friend who was already going down the stairs. "Say, why does she leave you?" she whispered.

"Oh, I am heartbroken at losing her."

"Well, why don't you keep her then?" asked Mrs. Paine, impatiently.

"My daughter got married and wants to stay with us, or we would never let Mrs. Delien go."

"What! That young thing married? I have not seen a thing, and there I am at the window all day."

"Well, you missed something," said Mrs. Lesser as she hastily went down the stairs to join her friend.

"Oh, what an irksome woman! I am afraid you won't be happy there."

"Well, perhaps it is my mission to go there," replied Mrs. Delien.

The good Mrs. Lesser took the Woman's arm as they crossed the street, then turned around to look at the apartment house where she had just rented the room. "Too bad, if we could only get that house, it is a dandy, so nice and sunny," said Mrs. Lesser.

"Yes, it is the sun I need, although I have a presentiment that all is not well. No matter how one will try to dodge that person she has a wicked tongue, but God will help us," she said slowly as they went in the house to pack. Alfred brought a school friend to help move their trunks and the grocer loaned them a cart so by the next day they were settled in their new home.

As they ate their dinner, Ronile looked at her mother sadly and said: "How different it was with Mrs. Lesser! Why did Frances marry so that we had to move?"

"It is the eternal WHY, the Way of the World, my dear, it was time for Frances to marry and we must just forget ourselves. See, my dear, we left the Hilberts to meet the Lessers. All this is on the roadside of our life's journey," and pointing to some briars she said, "We must be careful that we don't get pricked."

"Well, everybody is nice but Mrs. Paine, and I am going to say, 'How do you do,' to her even if she does look cross at me, and tells me not to walk up the stairs so often as I wear out her carpet."

"That is right, my dear, you must show her how to be polite. If it doesn't affect her today it might tomorrow."

In the evening they took a walk. A longing seemed to overcome them as they passed Lesser's corner. They were going on farther, but looking up toward their room they saw a light in it, and so hastily returned home. Being a corner room Mrs. Paine did not hear them coming in and as they stepped into their room they saw that Mrs. Paine had opened their trunk and held in her hand a bolt of ribbon. Mrs. Delien walked in and gently took the ribbon out of her landlady's hand and put it back into its place in the trunk. After closing the trunk she walked back to the door and held it ajar, keeping her eyes

steadily on the intruder, who upon recovering from the shock made a hasty departure.

"Good night, Mrs. Paine," said the Woman as she passed, but only a mumble of sounds came from the landlady. After closing the door the Woman sank into a chair.

"Did she steal anything, mother?" whispered Ronile.

"I don't think so," replied the mother.

"Do you think she will let me have my bath tonight? She may be angry."

"My dear, the bath is in the contract, but we will not mix in her wicked environment."

She went to the bathroom and turned on the water, which was cold. She went back to the kitchen door and knocked, saying, "Mrs. Paine, will you kindly light the gas for warm water?" but all the reply she heard was, "No, you brazen——" so she went back and told Ronile to take a cold sponge bath, saying, "It will do your nerves good," as she rubbed Ronile warm. Housekeeping was not easy in this place, as everything they bought mysteriously disappeared from their kitchen.

One day at lunch Ronile had to run out for sugar, and coming back Mrs. Paine met her at the top of the stairs saying, "How many times are you going to run up and down these stairs?"

"Well," said Ronile defiantly, "if you would let us keep our sugar I would not need to run out for more."

As she passed, the landlady grabbed her by the curls and pulled them, saying, "You brat! You dare call me a thief!"

Mrs. Delien came out and took Ronile carefully in and closed the door.

"Oh, mother, that wicked woman pulled my hair," she cried.

"Why did you give her a chance?" asked the mother.

"Well, I just told her if she would leave our sugar alone I would not have to wear out her carpet getting more."

"The least you say to this person the better. If you had not said that to her she would not have pulled your hair."

"Nobody ever did that to me before, and I don't want to live here any more."

The Woman put her finger to her lips and pointed to the door. Then slipping on her felt slippers she walked softly to the door and opened it quickly. The next instant Ronile laughed, as Mrs. Paine was leaning her full weight against the door and listening intently. When it opened she lost her balance, and fell into the room full length. The Woman stood erect trying hard to control herself, as she wanted to burst out laughing, too.

When the landlady got to her feet, she closed the door, saying, "Good day, Mrs. Paine, I hope you did not hurt yourself." The fat woman did jar her flabby body, but the fall taught her to keep her ear from that door. However, her anger was manifest and had to land somewhere. That night they were awakened by loud noises of protest and slander.

They heard an indistinct voice say, "How dare you come into my room at midnight?"

"I have a right to," was the reply, "you might bring some of those Chinese in here."

The Woman opened the door a little and saw Mrs. Paine across the room, looking under the bed for the man she could not find.

"You preposterous demon," cried the young lady who occupied the room, "I can come home any time I like, and what's more, you are so evil-minded that I don't trust myself in your house and would not be a bit surprised if you did not try to bring them here yourself." Like a serpent the fat woman flew at the young girl, who however was too quick for her, and before the fat woman could get her hands into her beautiful hair which was hanging down her back in two long braids, she grabbed the other by the shoulders and led her out, saying, "I don't teach gymnastics every night for nothing." She must have touched a tender spot on the landlady's shoulders for she screamed with pain. She then pushed her knees into the landlady's back touching the kidneys with each step, thus giving her unwelcome visitor a Chinese embrace, as she hastily departed.

After the girl had her unwelcome visitor safe behind

her own door, she said, her beautiful eyes shining through the darkness, "Now, mind, if I ever see you in my room again, at any time, I will get a warrant." She went back to her own room, saying to another roomer as she passed, "If only rooms were not so scarce, but on account of the Fair there are none to be had, and I like this sunny room."

Soon the house was quiet, but the Woman and Ronile could not suppress a laugh as they settled back to bed.

"A fine lesson, but it is too bad one must resort to such means to teach her to mind her own business," said Mrs. Delien.

Next morning Mrs. Delien led Ronile to the stairs, then went back to the kitchen to prepare some vegetables, when she heard the landlady telling a neighbor in the rear how one of her roomers had a man in the room, for she was suddenly grabbed by the back and beaten, "and my body is black and blue, they beat me up so."

"Dear Lord," thought Mrs. Delien, "is there no way of stopping that malicious tongue? Ronile is getting nervous about using the stairs. We must try to find something better."

There was a play at the State Normal School in which Ronile was taking part, so after lunch Ronile ran to ask Mrs. Lesser to come and hear her sing, telling her to be sure and come, as she kissed her dear Lesser Mama good-by, and shoved a piece of candy the good woman had given her into her mouth. She had taken the candy out of a box given to Frances, but would not tell Ronile where she got it, for fear the youngster would not enjoy it if the owner herself did not give it to her. The two women sat breathless when Ronile as "Arline" dressed in gypsy attire, stepped out on the stage.

"Don't clap too loud," said Mrs. Lesser, "she might become self-conscious and lose her poise." The song was a success, however. Ronile was all Arline as she sang: "Listen, while I relate the hope of a gypsy's fate," and the chorus joined in, "Happy and light the hearts of those who in each other's faith repose."

"She is a little queen," whispered Mrs. Lesser. "At the age of ten, she sings the Bohemian Girl; she is a won-

der. Oh, why aren't my folks here? If Papa were here you couldn't keep him in his seat. He would surely disturb her."

The scene changed; Thaddeus was sitting with crossed legs outside the tent, when Ronile as Arline appeared. As she came out of the tent she rubbed her eyes, and turning to Thaddeus, she sang, "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls."

"Oh, how sweet!" was the general remark. Mrs. Delien sat with folded hands, thanking the Creator for that child that could at such a tender age enchant so many. After the performance the teachers brought Ronile over to her mother. Each had a happy look of satisfaction on her face.

"A born actress," said the dramatic teacher, Lucille Smith.

"Yes, she will make good some day," said Mrs. McCowley, the singing teacher. "There was not a miss, and she carried her notes wonderfully."

"Let her keep this work up," said the principal, "for it is her God-given vocation."

On the way home Amelia Lesser would not let go of the great opera singer. "Some day you will not recognize us poor people when you get to be great. My, you took my breath away! I can't wait until papa comes home to tell him." As they bade Mrs. Lesser good-by she made them promise to come to dinner, which they did gladly.

On the way home Ronile said, "If Mrs. Lesser asks me to come some afternoon, I will gladly go for I am afraid I will forget my notes."

When they were sitting around the table, making a big fuss about Ronile, calling her the opera star, Ronile was sad. She had something on her mind.

"What is worrying you, dear?" asked her mother.

"I was thinking of how Mrs. Paine pulled my hair; can I tell it?"

"You have already," said Mrs. Lesser, amused. Then they told of their experience with the new landlady.

"Well, I'll be ——" thundered the boss! "I'll go

up and make her say her last prayers. I'll thrash every wicked spark out of that hussy."

"Gee, I'm glad she got it from that gymnasium teacher," said Alfred, "and you certainly gave her a hasty 'come in' by making her fall in. If you will let me, I'll cure her of taking things out of your pantry," continued Alfred.

"She is out now," said Ronile, disappointed that he could not do it at once.

"Well, that's the best time; can I?" asked Alfred.

"What will you do?" asked his father.

"Oh, if I told you, the fun would be gone."

"Well, sir, you can't go unless you tell right here," kept on his father.

"Well, if I must, all right." He went out into the kitchen, then came back, saying, "Mama, what did you do with the big scissors?" His mother told him to look in the machine drawer. Ronile had to go and get a large sheet of wrapping paper. Then Alfred told his father he would show him when he had finished. After awhile he came in and asked the crowd to come and see. He led them to a closet, then pulled the door swiftly ajar.

"Oh, my God," cried his mother, "a skeleton."

At first all were somewhat startled, then Alfred's father slapped him on the shoulder and said, "If that thing doesn't knock the daylights out of her when she opens the door, I'll be hanged!" Ronile and Alfred then went to Mrs. Delien's home to hang the mysterious skeleton on the light in the kitchen. He opened the window, then the door. The slight wind and suction of air made the paper form move slowly and mysteriously and they ran back to the Lesser home in great glee.

"Gee," said Alfred, "there will be a funeral if she sees that thing."

"Not she," said Mrs. Lesser. "The likes of her need a clubbing with a sledge hammer."

It was late when Ronile and her mother went home, as the folks said it was better to wait lest they arrived too soon, "for," said Ronile, "if she comes before us, she will not know Alfred and I were there in the meantime, and will think we have been out since six o'clock."

"Where did she go?" asked the boss.

"To some affair of the Lodge, I heard her say. You should have seen her. She was all dressed up in a funny colored dress and she went to the ten-cent store and bought eye-glasses to make herself look more refined," said Ronile.

"Oh, yes," said the mother, "she came to our door and asked us if we thought she looked swell enough, and say, she could not find gloves big enough to fit her hands, so she bought rubber gloves and seemed so happy because they were the color of her dress."

"You mean she wore rubber gloves to an entertainment at the Civic Auditorium?" asked Mrs. Lesser.

"Exactly," assured Mrs. Delien.

"Some nut," said Lester, as he bent over kissing his little honey-bunch for about the fiftieth time since dinner.

The next morning Mrs. Paine did not answer the bell when Mrs. Lesser came to see how the skeleton made out.

"Well," said Mrs. Delien, as she rolled up the paper ghost, "that skeleton seems to have done its work well. She is nowhere to be seen and I think from now on she will not be anxious to go into the kitchen."

CHAPTER XXVI

GOOD BLOSSOMS AMONG THISTLES AND THORNS

Mrs. Lesser walked to the window and pointing to a large building at the corner of Haight and Buchanan streets, said: "There is a first-class boarding-house, but I don't know whether they would allow you to get your own meals. I will go and see what arrangements can be made."

"You are so good, Mrs. Lesser, but please let me go. I know you will not rest until we are permanently settled," said Mrs. Delien.

"All right, we will go together," replied Mrs. Lesser. They passed through a little alley for a short cut, and in doing so got a full view of the garden in the yard belonging to the house, which had once been owned by a wealthy Scotch family.

"It looks like a nice place if we can judge by its looks," said Mrs. Lesser as she rang the bell, and waited inside the vestibule which was all in marble. The door was opened by a stout pleasant looking lady, whose hair was golden in color, although she looked to be between forty-five and fifty years old.

Mrs. Lesser spoke first. "Have you any light house-keeping rooms for rent?"

The lady shook her head saying, "I am sorry but this is a boarding-house."

"Oh," said Mrs. Delien, "is there no way you could manage so that I could get our own meals? I like the place very much and would like to live here. What do you charge for board and room?"

"Yes, I think I could," said the landlady as she looked at the enquirer, then said, "Ten dollars a week for room and two meals a day."

"Oh, I have a daughter who is going to Normal School, and that would be more than I could pay."

"But," said Mrs. Lesser hopefully, "you don't charge full board for a girl of ten?"

"No, I could make it sixty dollars a month for both,"

replied the landlady; "come in and let us talk it over, perhaps we can arrange it in some way."

"I wonder if you know her daughter?" asked Mrs. Lesser. "If I remember rightly I think I saw you at the school at the opera."

"I was," answered the landlady, interested.

"Well," said Mrs. Lesser, "the little girl who played 'Arline' is the daughter of this lady."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, this is Mrs. Delien, and Ronile is her daughter."

"You must be very proud of such a pretty little girl with such wonderful curls. We know her very well." She thought for a moment, then said: "Let's see, I have a room with twin beds. I could let you have that for twenty dollars a month, and if you thought the board was more than you could afford to pay, you could cook your meals in our kitchen," and again sizing up Mrs. Delien, she went on, "You don't look like a busy-body or a woman who would leave things untidy."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Lesser. "She has been living with us, and we got along so well, but my daughter got married and she is so young that I can't let her live away from me; otherwise we would not let Mrs. Delien leave us, never," she concluded.

"The very fact of your coming with the lady shows how much you care for her welfare," said Mrs. Handel, the landlady. Here she arose, saying, "Let us go upstairs and look at the room." The room was nicely furnished with two brass beds, and bird's-eye maple dresser and chiffonier.

"Oh, this is a nice room, and it is just as sunny as the other and there is such a nice view, but can you pay the twenty dollars?" she whispered to Mrs. Delien.

"Oh, we will manage some way," came the answer, with a hopeful look in her eyes. They went to the window overlooking the garden. A huge, stately palm grew in the center; there were all kinds of flowers in bloom, and artistic arbors covered with all kinds of roses, climbing up to the second story.

"This is nice," said Mrs. Handel, showing them the

advantage of the sun as it came in at the different angles of the bay window.

"A good place to work in," said Mrs. Delien, much pleased, but trying not to show too much enthusiasm. An inward prayer was sent out, "If it is Thy will, oh, Father, here I would love to praise Thee, for Thy stars will shine, Thy sun and moonbeams reach my bed."

"Here you would have peace and quiet," said her friend; "you will earn more and then it will be easy to pay the rent."

Coming back into the drawing-room, the Woman admired the gorgeous chandelier of crystal, also the hand-painted fresco work on the wall and the ceiling.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lesser, "here is an artist; she received the Gold Medal at the Fair."

"How wonderful!" said Mrs. Handel, clasping her hands; "and to think she has a Gold Medal and yet cannot afford to eat with us."

"Thus is the way of the world," said the Woman, smiling, as they started home to get ready to move.

"My," said Alfred to his chum as they wheeled the trunk through the alley, "I bet that fat hussy is still in bed and now that Mrs. Delien is moving she will think that Ronile and her mother saw the ghost, too. Say, you know, the gym teacher is moving in the same place; it's just what she wanted," Alfred continued.

"That will surely prove to that busy-body that something is not quite right," said Alfred's partner. "This is quite a contrast to that other place."

"The first dinner, you will have to eat in the dining-room for I want you to meet my guests," begged the landlady when the Woman and Ronile had moved in. In a clever way the hostess told the rest of the guests that they would not be with them every meal as Ronile was on a diet, and "they eat very simple food," she concluded.

There were Dr. Maclensia, a Spanish gentleman and his spinster sister, who were visiting the World's Fair. He seemed to enjoy having new guests, and remarked that they could eat their simple meal in the dining-room and not upstairs.

At the end of the table sat Mrs. Wesson from Con-

necticut, who spent her time traveling around, and utilized most of it, it seemed, in trying to appear younger than she really was, for in spite of her gray hair she wore a Dresden ribbon tied around her head with a bow on the side, and a pink dinner gown graced her lean form, her neck and ears being adorned with coral decorations. Her eyes were of a gray-green color, and very small; her mouth, however, was quite large, showing a set of even false teeth, that seemed to clap at times as she tried to do justice to the delicious looking ear of corn. At the doctor's remark she stopped eating, and looking at him meaningly, said, "Do I hear aright? This—a—lady"

"Mrs. Delien," corrected the hostess.

"Oh, yes," she continued, "is going to cook her own meals; will you have room in your kitchen, my dear Mrs. Handel?"

"Lots of good sheep go in a stable," answered the landlady joyfully. A thankful look greeted her as she glanced at her new guest.

"Are you a working woman?" asked Mrs. Wesson, trying to show the doctor that he need not interest himself too closely in a common worker.

"I am," was the simple answer.

Here the white-haired decorated lady looked at the landlady with a reproachful look, saying, "You have been recommended to me as a first-class boarding-house keeper."

"They informed you correctly," came the quick reply from Mrs. Handel, who had begun to bite her lips and look somewhat annoyed.

"But you never rented light housekeeping rooms," said Mrs. Wesson.

"I don't call that common; we have a fire all day and it will not make much difference to the stove who cooks as long as I am satisfied; besides this little lady here," pointing to Ronile, "is a little run down. You may have read some time ago about how she got hurt at the Southern Pacific station, and was taken to the hospital."

"Oh, I do remember," said the doctor, "so you are the little lady, but you are well now?"

"Oh, yes, thank you I am very well," answered Ronile.

"Too bad, doctor, that you missed the play at the Normal School," said Mrs. Handel, "this young lady played and sang beautifully. I saw her. I also want to draw your attention to her mother, Mrs. Delien, who is the owner of that beautiful basket of flowers at the Fair, and was awarded the Gold Medal, so I don't think we should class her as a common working woman. It is bad enough that an artist like Mrs. Delien has to live with us." Here she looked at Mrs. Wesson with a triumphant glint in her eye, thinking, "Now will you be good."

"She ought to be living at the St. Francis," replied the lady of the Dresden ribbon.

After dinner, Ronile remarked to her mother, "Why is the old lady tied on top with a ribbon?"

A bystander, a young man, heard the remark and laughingly said, "Why, the lady's brains have to be tied up so they can't leak out."

When they went upstairs, they sat by the window and watched the sunset. "Mother, we can see the sun all day, from rising to setting," said Ronile.

"Yes, dear, we will thank the Father for leading us here, but from now on we will eat our meals alone, and avoid the stigma of the lady who does not know us and yet dislikes us."

"I know why," said Ronile. "Somebody in the kitchen said, 'There will be trouble if that good-looking newcomer eats at the table with Mrs. Wesson and the doctor, for she has her cap set for him.'"

"Well, my dear, from now on you will not listen to any such remarks and we will stay to ourselves," said the mother much relieved. "This is a kingdom; such a garden and fine view of the sky, why we will never need a light in here!" Here the Woman stretched out her arms, not in crucifixion, but in thanksgiving for the redemption, a move to exaltation.

Ronile pulled out the zither and begged her mother to play.

"Why, my dear?" asked her mother.

"Oh, I don't know, but I just feel you ought to play

and thank the Lord. He will hear your gladness through the music and bless this house."

"Very well, my good little partner," said the mother, as she struck the notes on the autoharp.

Ronile stood up and sang in a clear voice, "Hope in the Lord." The mother sang alto. Forgotten was the world, as these two children of God sang their praises from thankful hearts. After they had finished they both looked up at the sky; a light seemed to shoot down like a comet.

"Oh," said Ronile, as she clasped her hands, "did I not tell you? God sends us greetings with a light from the stars and here on the hill we can see every star that shoots through the sky." After a while sounds of piano-playing came from the rooms below.

A woman's voice was trying hard to express love's sweet sentiment by singing as loud as she could, "I only know I love you; love me and the world is mine."

"That's for the doctor," said Ronile in a whisper.

"Deary, this change has almost made you mischievous. I don't like to have you pass remarks about people. They are unfortunately very selfish and far from happy."

"Somebody is knocking," said Ronile, running to the door and opening it. The visitor was Annabelle, Mrs. Handel's adopted daughter. She was a fair young girl, with oval face, straight nose, a perfect mouth and large brown eyes, and the sad expression on her face made her resemble a flower.

She took Ronile in her arms and patted her, saying, "I like to see you play; that was grand at school."

"Did you like it, you sweet Madonna face?" said Ronile in earnest. Annabelle laughed, showing a row of perfectly shaped pearl-white teeth.

The Woman asked her to come in, but the pretty girl excused herself, saying, "I have no time now, but Mrs. Handel would like to have you come down into the drawing-room with the harp. Is that it?" asked Annabelle going toward the zither, "I thought from the sound that it was a great big harp, and they are arguing about it,

saying you did not bring a large instrument when you moved in, and yet you play it."

"Deary," said the Woman, "we are not like other people and don't belong in the drawing-room. So tell your dear mother not to call us hereafter, will you?"

"All right," said the girl, half-disappointed, "but you will come down now?"

"Yes, we will."

They walked down the great staircase, Ronile singing, "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls."

Mrs. Handel came over and led them to a settee, saying, "Where is the harp?"

"We never play it in public, and did not think you heard us," said Mrs. Delien.

"Yes, we heard you, and we did so enjoy the sweet strain," said the cordial landlady.

Ronile walked over, studying some notes on the piano.

"Ah, Miss Ronilia," said the doctor, walking over to her, "you play?"

"A little," replied Ronile.

"Why don't you?" he asked.

"May I?" she asked, turning to the landlady, who saw her pleading look and said, "Yes, Ronile, play something."

"You must excuse me if I make mistakes; I have not practiced lately." She sat down and played Paderewski's "Minuet." The doctor and his sister arose and danced it with elegance and grace. When they finished all clapped and the dancers praised the musician.

"It is my favorite piece," said the Spanish lady, Miss Dolores Maclensia. "I love it. Paderewski was my teacher, and you, Miss Ronilia, play very well; you are so young."

"Play a Fox Trot," interrupted Mrs. Wesson.

"I am sorry, I can't play popular music at all," said Ronile.

"Very good for you; there is not much harmony in it," said the Spanish lady.

"That was very good, Ronile," said Mrs. Handel.

"Music just bubbles out of you, and whenever you want

to practice, you are welcome to use the piano after four in the afternoon."

"I take my nap in the afternoon," said Mrs. Wesson, pettishly.

"But, madam," said the doctor, "you don't intend to sleep after four in the afternoon? Of course, I admit you need a lot of beauty sleep but that you can get between two and four."

The obstinate, love-sick lady crossed her legs impatiently. She did not like to have the doctor address her so rudely and blamed the newcomer. Mrs. Delien felt the antagonism and thought she and Ronile would keep out of that lady's way.

The landlady's thoughts ran the same way as she looked sweetly toward her new guest, who walked over toward her, saying, "You realize we do not belong here and please don't ask us again."

A sigh came from the good-natured blonde hostess, as she said: "Now, I want to love you just as much as the lady you lived with before, so please feel at home. The house is open to all my guests, remember that."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Handel." Here the conversation ended, as Miss Maclensia was playing. Ronile complied with the request of the Spanish people by singing, "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls." All eyes were fixed on the little girl as she stood by the piano, her eyes running over the notes and her voice ringing out as if she alone were there, and that there was a forest of cool, balmy breezes with a mixture of pine and laurel. The drawing-room was forgotten. There stood the gypsy maid, entrancing the audience and leading them through the forest up a great mountain with rippling brooks and roaring waterfalls, into a great marble palace with glittering jewels in its mammoth pillars. There were fountains in the great rotunda and downy swans gliding through the mirror-like surface. Great arbors of smilax and myrtle concealed the meditators, while huge orchards of orange blossoms filled the air in accord with the chirping of the mocking birds and nightingales, where lips met to seal a promise of everlasting love. "But I also dreamt, which pleased me most, that you loved me still the same,"

she concluded. Her eyes changed to a natural expression.

"You are very wonderful!" said the doctor, going toward her and taking her hand in his and patting her gently as he continued: "You must keep this up; the world needs you, but just as you are now. Forget the world and lead them as you did us this evening, then you will create only happiness."

"I will try," said Ronile, as she joined her mother to retire.

"Good night, little star, keep shining," said Mrs. Handel from the lower hall as they ascended.

After they had gone, it seemed the life of the party had disappeared, and some began to yawn. "She is a very good entertainer," said one of the gentlemen. Mrs. Wesson had not taken much part in praising the little girl. She kept twisting her precious jeweled rings on her bony fingers during the singing.

On hearing this remark she said impatiently: "You make me sick, one would think she were the only little girl on earth. Why, she will be so stuck up she won't know us tomorrow."

"Oh, no," said the doctor, "she knows not herself when art comes in. It is not in her. She is just a natural child, beautiful in every way. It is proven that the best way to become beautiful is to think wholesome and beautiful thoughts. I have studied some occult science. It teaches in a wonderful way. Thought manipulation; it works like a thread that shoots from the shuttle of the brain and weaves on the garment of existence. This child's shuttle weaves for everybody alike, thus it shrouds everything it comes in contact with into a beautiful robe. Being clothed in such attire you must esteem the giver. One is not comfortable entering a palace with chappes on."

"The attire makes the man's appearance," said Mr. Handel, a sickly looking man, with a pleasing smile and seemingly a great thinker. "You are right in what you say, doctor, I agree with you and if you can't always be in full dress, one can easily radiate with a smiling

countenance. This has been a happy evening and I feel better," said Mr. Handel to his wife.

"Yes, dear, this child brings happiness and I don't blame the Woman for keeping her away from the environment of a jealous person like Mrs. Wesson."

"Yes, I believe her selfish disposition makes her homely," said Mr. Handel.

"I am sorry for her," said his wife, "we are going to try to keep them apart. I enjoy the little one's company, but her mother won't let her sing every night, I am sure."

She was right for every night after supper Ronile and her mother took a walk and if Mrs. Wesson was in the drawing-room singing, the rest of the guests went out for a walk and in coming back would resort to the back staircase to get to their rooms.



"There stood the gypsy maid, entrancing the audience and leading them through great forests, to arbors of sniilax and myrtle, where lips met to seal a promise of everlasting love."—Page 182.



CHAPTER XXVII

JUST A VIOLET CHRISTMAS MORNING

Christmas was drawing near; the Fair was closing. The Woman tried hard to sell her display but as she could go to the Fair Grounds only on Sunday, it seemed the visitors were just admirers and not buyers. Wearily the Woman and Ronile walked toward the Fine Arts Palace. Ronile stood by the statue of the Duck-baby while her mother snapped her picture. The magnificent buildings had lost their beautiful aspect, some starting to crumble at the corners. Thousands of pigeons flew around seeking for crumbs.

It was a chilly day and the Woman remarked, "If I don't sell the basket today, then I will know that I should keep it."

"God may not want you to sell it, mother dear," said Ronile.

"Perhaps not," came the weary reply. Thus the great gates closed and the curtain fell on a City Beautiful that held in its embrace achievements from millions of minds, as they handed the gift of creation down from century to century, absorbing the brilliancy of each mind as they passed along on the road of time.

"Oh, mother," said Ronile, "where will all the jewels from the great tower go?"

"They are coming down to be sold like everything that has climbed to bear fruit. Our basket has well served its mission. There is a diploma, a blue ribbon and a gold medal which we hold as the price it attained."

"Well, then," said Ronile, "why not keep the basket? Mama Handel," as she called the new landlady, "said we should put it in the drawing-room, case and all," continued Ronile, as she was anxious to keep the basket.

"But, dear," said the mother wistfully, "suppose we want to go east?"

"It can go with us, mother," came the practical answer.

"You are right," said the mother, more cheerfully, "we will just hold onto it until the buyer comes along, or

perhaps we are to keep it; otherwise it would have been sold long ago."

A lady buyer who had given the flower-maker many orders, came along as they returned and stood by the exhibit. She represented one of the largest stores.

"Did you sell it?" she asked, anxious that the Woman should get her money out of the work.

"No," came the answer.

"Well," said the buyer, "take out the flowers, and I will buy them."

"I can't," said the artist, "it is like tearing the branches from a tree."

"You are right," said the buyer, looking over the basket, "it would be a shame to tear apart such a wonderful creation. If I had my way I would buy it for a window display with French novelties, but the manager says, 'What will it bring?' He thinks it ought to go into the Museum and really, that is the place for it," she concluded.

"I can't afford to donate it now. I will let you display it if you wish," said the Woman.

"All right," came the pleased answer, "then you won't have to bother about moving it. When our men take out our exhibit, they can move yours also."

A few days later Annabelle came eagerly to the Woman's room, saying: "Your basket is at the corner window of the great stores, and it looks grand; there are crowds of people around admiring it. You ought to see it."

After a month the display was transferred to the Hotel St. Francis, where it enchanted the guests in the Lounging Room for a year.

After the Fair closed the Sundays seemed lonesome to Ronile and her mother. They usually went to Golden Gate Park to listen to the music. One Sunday it rained.

"No park, today," said Ronile in a disappointed tone as she looked out of the window.

"Suppose we take a walk down town," suggested the mother, which they did. Going down Page Street they passed Druid's Temple. A sign on the door announced a spiritualistic gathering and named a noted male medium.

"I heard the doctor speak of him, he calls him a won-

der," said the Woman. "It is queer, I cannot read the book he gave me. Every time I look at the print it begins to swim in front of me. I wonder if this medium could answer why," she thought, and with this on her mind they joined the already started circle. They took the last seats and watched intently the gentleman in the center of the fairly filled hall. The Woman's thought again went out to him, "Why can I not read that book?" The medium stopped short in his message that he was transmitting to a lady about a departed son.

Coming toward the flower-maker he said, "Why should you gather fallen leaves when your own tree of knowledge needs all the attention you can give it?"

"How wonderful," thought the Woman, "he answered my thoughts."

"Sister," he said, "why are you in the last seat? You should be in the center to give unto hungry souls, for the light of spiritual wisdom shines on your brow. You must give out as the great loving spirit of charity has chosen you to transmit."

He took the Woman's hand and led her to the center of the hall. No introduction was necessary, for it was a spiritual gateway that opens by an all-seeing eye, where self is forgotten, the soul tied to the banner of Lead Thou Me On.

As if under a hypnotic spell she gave out what first came to her mind, and went to the ones she felt most impressed to go to, giving as it came in rapid current of thought, getting stronger as she went, thus proving to be an able transmitter between body and soul. After reaching about the tenth eager person who waited for a sign from a loved one departed, she became herself again and stopped.

"What have I told you, my sisters and brothers? there is a star shining through each of you, only you keep it concealed in egoism," said the presiding gentleman medium. Turning to the newly installed medium, he said, "My good sister, may the unseen spirit of love and wisdom guide you on. Have you ever been in public before?"

"No," came the simple answer.

"Well, then, it is not fair to soul and man, if you do

understand the law of transmission, to keep that power from spreading. Remember it was the greatest teaching of Christ, the Nazarene, to impress spiritualism on mankind." The flower-maker went back to her seat.

Ronile took her hand, saying, "Oh, mother, I was so worried, but you did well."

"I hardly know what I did," came the distant answer.

"Whatever made you do it," said Ronile, wisely, "you did well. Why mother, you told them wonderful things. Some of them are still crying. One lady said she tried for years to get in touch with the soul of her husband, and you brought him; how wonderful," Ronile whispered.

After the prayer of thanks was said and the organ played, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," many people came over to get the address of the Woman for a private interview, but the Woman said she could not do that as she was making flowers.

"Come next Wednesday afternoon, then, we want you so badly to help us, as the congregation grows and good mediums are scarce."

It was close to Christmas and the Woman worked hard to turn out her orders. She felt that giving the test weakened her and she had not the strength to make the flowers, so she gave up going to the meetings. The last Wednesday afternoon before Christmas she worked hard to turn out an order. However, a strong desire overcame her to go to Druid's Temple. Her ambition for the flowers seemed to weaken so she thought a walk down the hill, if she was needed to help, would at least brace her up, and she could finish the order in the evening. She changed her dress and went. As she went in, the medium, Mrs. Smith, was on the platform.

"See, my sisters and brothers," she said as she made room for the newcomer, "our prayer helped, here she is."

"Do you need me?" asked the flower-maker.

"Yes, we do," said the medium, with a painful twitch on her sweet face.

"Very well, I will see." They had a table in the center of the room. On it were trinkets, flowers, envelopes, all kinds of emblems to reach toward the unseen departed loved ones.

"What is this for?" asked the flower-maker.

"Did you never give flower readings?" asked Mrs. Smith.

"No, but I will try," and thus saying the Woman reached mechanically toward something, then stopped as if she were listening to someone. She took a bracelet and held it in her left hand, then walked toward Mrs. Smith, who was sitting on the platform.

"I hear a Dr. Briggs, and he leads me to you," said the Woman. Mrs. Smith laughed and looked at the audience with understanding.

"You all know what this means," she said. Doctor Briggs was Mrs. Smith's spirit guide and controller. The Woman did not know that. She still held the bracelet in one hand, then with the other took the arm of Mrs. Smith and gave it a quick twist. Then she turned it slowly one way, then the other. There was a cracking sound as if something fell into place.

When finished, she looked at Mrs. Smith, saying, "I don't know why I had to do this, I just had to."

"I know you did," said Mrs. Smith, with a happy smile. "Why do you know, my good people, this is a great manifestation. You all know I fell and dislocated my shoulder. I did not want to disappoint you, so I came, but I could not read for you. Then we prayed and the good Doctor Briggs worked through our dear sister here, and now I am well. Is it not wonderful how the spirit loved ones prepare and pave our future way with their achieved knowledge and patience?" and turning to the Woman, she asked: "My dear, why don't you start and receive these people? It is your vocation, and you must work through this channel."

"I can't, for in the house where I live there are so many people who don't understand," said the Woman.

"Come to my home tonight; we will see by the trumpet what the guides have to say for you," said Mrs. Smith.

"Not this week, I must finish my order, but next Wednesday evening I shall be happy to come."

It was Christmas Eve, and huge packages were coming in for all in the house.

"There was a wooden box from Chicago," said Ronile,

"but mother, Mrs. Handel has put all the Christmas boxes under the tree and tomorrow morning we will get them."

"A very good idea," said the flower-maker, clearing away the last bits of thread. "No flowers will be made next week," she said happily.

"Oh, I am so glad, mother, for you are so restless at night. You toss and twitch so that I can hardly sleep."

"Yes, I know I need a rest," said the mother, as she brushed her hair before retiring.

Next morning they were awakened by the sounds of the Victrola. A full voice was singing, "Open the Gates of the Temple." They rose quickly and dressed. Just as Ronile received a new light blue ribbon on her curls, a knock came at the door.

"Come in," said Ronile, beating her mother to the door in her excitement. It was Annabelle with two bunches of violets from Mama and Daddy Handel.

"They are waiting for you at the breakfast table." They pinned on the flowers, but a few were pulled out to put before grandma and grandpa's pictures. Looking back with satisfaction, Ronile joined her mother and Annabelle going down the stairs.

The rest of the guests were all assembled at their usual places, a large Christmas tree stood at the bay window. Underneath were boxes piled up and dainty things displayed.

When they entered all rose and wished them a Merry Christmas. Dr. Maclensia made a low bow, then said: "Oh, the pleasure, madam. It is a long time since you graced this table with your esteemed presence."

"Thank you," said the Woman, as she sat down. It was a pretty sight, these happy people in a large beautifully decorated room, a mellow fire burning in the grate throwing mysterious little shadows over the glittering ornaments on the splendidly decorated tree. A delicious breakfast was served. The attentive hostess glanced over her guests with a satisfied expression.

Her eyes rested a few minutes on the doctor, then suddenly she exclaimed: "Oh, my, how neglectful I am, the doctor has not even a boutonniere! I should have thought of that."

"That's easily fixed," said Annabelle, with a slight blush on her velvety cheeks. Her beautiful eyes glanced over the bunches of violets worn by the other guests. She rose and went from one to the other, collecting a violet from each lady, thus making a buttonhole bouquet for the doctor.

"A good idea," said Mrs. Handel. But when Annabelle came to Mrs. Wesson the latter held both her bony hands over her bouquet, to which she had added an American beauty from the garden, just to appear more distinguished.

"Why not?" asked the girl impatiently.

"Well," said the white-haired lady, who was dressed in a new lavender shade morning gown, trimmed with French roses, her hair tied with the same colored ribbon, "I want to give the dear doctor a bunch all alone."

"Give him two if you want to," put in the practical hostess.

Annabelle sighed impatiently as she waited to receive a flower from Mrs. Wesson, who she thought acted very silly and in a manner not becoming to her white hair. Annabelle at last walked away, passing Mr. Handel and patting him affectionately on the shoulder, which he returned with a loving glance.

When Annabelle came to Mrs. Delien, the white-haired lady protested, saying, "Annabelle, if you take any flowers from Mrs. Delien for the doctor I won't give you any of mine."

"Then keep them," said the girl, a deep flush crossing her face.

"You jealous cat," said Mrs. Handel, forgetting her poise for the moment, "but I love you anyway," she added.

The doctor noticed the pallor of the Woman's face, and a look of pity ran across the table. He rose and bowed courteously, saying, "I want one violet from the distinguished flower-maker."

"Now, doctor," interrupted Mrs. Wesson, trying hard to appear girlish, "why not take my flowers?"

Here the Woman looked at him with great sadness in her eyes. "Really, doctor, take them," she said, pointing

to Mrs. Wesson. "I am too poor to spare any." Here Miss Maclensia rose and walked over to the Woman, kissing her on each cheek. Then pulling one flower out of the Woman's corsage bouquet, walked back gracefully and put it in the doctor's buttonhole. Annabelle took the small bunch she had collected and put them in her daddy's buttonhole. He kissed his little girl affectionately. A depressed condition seemed to prevail. Ronile looked up at her mother who tried hard to suppress the tears that were gathering, as she thought, "Why did we come?"

"Peace on Earth, Good Will to Man," said the hostess as she rose to help clear the table before distributing the boxes to the different owners. "Now, doctor, you are the distributor for this year, as our daddy's heart is in bad shape and we must prevent excitement." Here she gave a warning look at the white-haired trouble-maker.

Mrs. Wesson's boxes were piled up at the front, some already unpacked to show the dainty garments. One could hear the impatient beats of her foot as the distributor went over to get the first present. He looked over the heap of negligee garments ironically and passed them on. His eyes fell on a beautiful poinsettia tied with two large bows of ribbon which matched the delicate shade of flower.

He looked at the card and read: "To our dear Mrs. Delien, for the good transmitting work she rendered us," and signed "The Ladies' Aid."

"It is very beautiful," said the doctor. "So that is why we don't see you with us; you give your valuable sunshine to strangers and let us freeze."

"There is no outside for me," said the Woman, a happy look returning as she laid her hand on the huge plant. He then gave the hostess a box from himself and his sister, containing a beautiful dressing-gown.

"My, she won't look at me when she wears that," said the host.

"Oh, now, daddy," she called back with a loving smile. Mrs. Wesson became impatient. The doctor knew this but still dodged her boxes.

"Is there nothing for me?" she called, no longer able to control her impatience and the neglect the doctor so vividly showed.

He turned as she spoke and said, "You bought so much, I will never get finished, if I once begin on your boxes, and besides you have seen everything already, for you were the first one in here this morning."

"I would leave the room, mother, if he spoke to me like that," said Ronile, from behind the poinsettia.

The doctor presented his sister with a beautiful pair of earrings of sapphire and diamonds, saying as he handed them over to her, "If madam had not had that beautiful exhibit I would never have found these earrings, but I saw them and bought them while you were lost in thought in front of the flower basket." Then he brought out a box neatly tied with red and gold ribbon.

"May I open it?" he asked.

"Yes, do," said Ronile.

Then he brought forth a little basket, hand-crocheted and gilded, "For my dear mother," it read, thus handing it to the Woman, then pulling it back again as the Woman kissed Ronile in appreciation, saying, "I want one, too, or I will not give it."

"All right, doctor," said Ronile getting up. She kissed her mother on the cheek, then ran over and kissed the doctor.

"There you are," she said, taking the basket from his hand and handing it to her mother. There was a basket for each of the ladies, even Mrs. Wesson.

"How sweet of you," she said, with an angry look at the doctor as he handed her basket to her.

Then he handed some other things to her, saying, "You were a good customer these days."

Then he gave her a picture from Annabelle. It was a little dark-haired boy in his nightgown, sitting on the moon.

"How beautiful," said the Woman, "it always reminds me of our little brother that joined God's high regions when he was a baby."

"I have a picture like that at home," said Mrs. Wesson, little concerned.

"Perhaps," said the Woman, "you would like a different one; if so go and select one at the store and charge it to me."

"I will do no such thing," Mrs. Wesson answered haughtily.

"Another slap," said the gymnasium teacher, who was now boarding with Mrs. Handel.

Mrs. Delien and the teacher never referred to the experience in the other place, but became good friends as time passed.

"I know a partner for her," she said, raising her brows meaningly, and did not care whether she heard it or not.

"I will get you one," said the doctor.

"No, thank you," replied Mrs. Delien, "I did not mean to possess one absolutely; let's drop the subject," she continued impatiently.

There was a box from Kenwood, containing a beautiful boudoir cap for Mrs. Delien from Ruth and her husband.

"Oh," cried Ronile, "she is married, my darling Ruth."

Then came six fine handkerchiefs with tatting on the edges in assorted colors. These were for Ronile. A medallion centerpiece from Mrs. Hilbert and a tatted bag for each from Aunt Emma.

"How good they were to think of us."

More boxes went to Mrs. Wesson, one of which contained a magnificent shawl. Then came a large box from Nebraska for Mrs. Delien. The doctor opened it up and carefully laid the things on the table. There were six pairs of the finest quality of silk stockings for each, also the same number of handkerchiefs, some Irish crochet collars, a ring for Ronile from Cousin Anna, a beautifully embroidered corset bag and a muff hanger. In a tin box were aniscakes, springeles and macaroons and a box of Maravilla Garden Tea.

"Oh," said the Woman, "this is the best tea I ever tasted; the dear aunty knows that I like it and sent me some." Then came a small bottle of Jamaica ginger, and some essence of peppermint, a box of camomile tea and a small bottle of valerian.

"That's just like my good aunty, thinking of everything," said Mrs. Delien.

"Have you finished with Mrs. Delien's groceries?" asked Mrs. Wesson.

"Not yet, madam," he replied in the same cutting tone, and kept on pulling more things out of the box. On the bottom there was a large envelope with a Christmas card, In the card was a fifty dollar bill.

"Oh," said the Spanish gentleman, "I am very delighted with this box of groceries. I hope, my dear flower-artist, that you will always receive such groceries and that I will have the pleasure of unpacking them."

He then handed Ronile a small package on which was written, "From Doctor and Miss Maclensia."

"You must open it yourself," he said with a gesture so characteristic among the Latin people. Every eye was turned toward Ronile. She hastily opened the box and pulled out a blue and gold enameled wrist watch.

"Oh, this is just what I admired but would not wish for it, as they are very expensive," she said, jumping up and kissing the doctor and his sister heartily. Then she slipped the watch on her wrist and admired it constantly.

The doctor said: "You see we waited with your present until the last to find out what a perfect little lady you are. Now I am very happy, you never asked for one thing."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Handel, rising as it was time to look after her household duties. "Dinner will be served at four, so please be ready and you, too, Mrs. Delien, are my guest and thank you for the beautiful gift and flower you gave me."

"I thank you very kindly for the invitation, Mrs. Handel, but beg to be excused."

"I don't blame her," said someone behind her. "I would rather not eat than to swallow the insults Mrs. Wesson gives her."

Miss Maclensia came up to her, saying, "Doctor and I would be very happy if you would join us at lunch down town."

"You are very kind to think of us but please don't mind if we decline, as we have an engagement for dinner at two and will go to another friend's home for dinner at seven in the evening."

They went to their room to get dressed to go out, and soon the tooting of an automobile horn was heard and they hastily left the house. Ronile wore a pretty coat of Copenhagen blue, trimmed with white ermine fur, with cap of the same material and trimmed in fur to match the coat. The Woman wore a mauve colored tailored suit trimmed with moleskin and a turban of the same material.

After they had gone with a gentleman in the automobile, Mrs. Wesson said to the gymnasium teacher, who remained in the drawing-room with the rest: "How does she dress like that? You can't tell me—no wonder," she kept on sarcastically, pressing her thin lips tightly together for a moment, "there is nothing for nothing."

"What do you mean?" asked the teacher.

"Still water runs deep," said the other meaningly. Then she pointed toward Haight Street, where they went, saying: "Auto rides, dinner parties—and such a gown—Look at the expensive dresses, you can't tell me that a working woman can afford them." The teacher remained silent to see how far she would go, which encouraged the other to proceed with her slanderous remarks, "Why is she so quiet?" and to herself, "And look how she vamped the doctor; perhaps he bought her that outfit."

This was too much for the athletic, wholesome-minded girl. She crossed her arms and stood defiantly before Mrs. Wesson, saying: "I would like to tear that viperous tongue out of your mouth! Shame on you! Why that coat of Ronile's was made out of a cape which was out of style, and both Miss Maclensia and I helped her finish it in my room to get it ready for a Christmas present for Ronile, and if you want to know, Mrs. Lesser brought her the fur for a Christmas present knowing she would get the coat. The Lessers got the fur in Alaska. The suit worn by Mrs. Delien is the same suit she has on in a picture taken four years ago, and no one but herself earned the money to pay for it. It is too bad that you would not resort to some honest work with your lazy hands, instead of using your vile tongue in trying to pull down others who do their best to make both ends meet."

"My allowance keeps me independent," replied Mrs. Wesson, as she raised her eyebrows and shoulders and

crossed her legs as if she wanted to kick away the defiant girl who breathlessly threw at her all that the others had long had in their minds but who ignored her instead.

"Another thing I want you to understand," said the girl slowly and distinctly, "the gentleman who came for her is the grocer she is dealing with and when his child was near death, this Woman went and stayed all night praying for its recovery and it lived, after the doctors had given it up. He is only paying back a courtesy well worth while."

"Why doesn't his wife pay back the courtesy?" asked the other maliciously.

Here the girl turned around swiftly, throwing a look of disgust at the slanderer in the chair as she said, "Enough now, you viper. The fire of hell burns through your being," and with an offhand gesture with both arms, she continued, "Don't ever speak to me again," and left the gray-haired lady to think over what she had said.

"Everyone except Mrs. Wesson is going out to dinner," said Annabelle, "and if it were not for her we would not have to cook dinner."

"Well, everybody else has friends. She thinks because she has money she doesn't have to cater to anyone. Now the doctor has given her up."

"I don't blame him," said Mrs. Handel, who heard this remark as she came into the room. "How is she now?"

"Crying, as usual, if things go wrong, and she doesn't get her way, then she keeps me busy putting cologne on her kerchief," said Annabelle.

"It breaks her heart that the doctor gave her such knocks," said Mrs. Handel.

"Well, why did she knock Mrs. Delien? The poor woman could not show her face that she did not pass some disagreeable remark. Ronile and her mother use the back staircase all the time so she will not see them," replied Annabelle.

"No use doing that," said Daddy Handel, "I want all our people to be happy and not afraid of anyone."

"There is one who is not afraid of her, and that is the teacher. My, how she handed it to her," said Annabelle, with a gleam of satisfaction in her eyes. "I would

be ashamed to show my face if anybody spoke to me like that."

"Things come back in the same measure they are given out; the world is a great big echo," said Mr. Handel. "I don't blame the doctor for quitting her; his sister has had no use for her for some time and is glad they are rid of her," said Mrs. Handel. "They are idealistic people and admire the Woman for trying so hard to keep in good environment for Ronile's sake."

"Yes, that child would dance every evening, but Mrs. Wesson owns that drawing-room. She will soon be left alone, as the others spend the evenings in each other's rooms, instead of being altogether and enjoying themselves. They burn double light, too."

Weeks passed and indeed Mrs. Wesson was left alone. The doctor bought a car and was out most of the time.

Ronile was studying a new role. She was to play the part of Light in the "Blue Bird." Her mother made the costume—a white satin slip with flowing streamers of maline, tinted in very soft shades. Rhinestones were sewed all over the dainty fabric and from the low neck ran long threads of silver strings with bugles at the end giving the effect of rays of light. They cut a five-cornered star and covered it with rhinestones, then fastened it on a silver band, to which invisible wires were attached. The top of the silver bands was fastened and covered with silver threads and rhinestones, giving the effect of a beautiful halo.

The whole household was excited about the Bluebird girl, and all wanted to snap her picture under the big palm tree. Poor Mrs. Wesson gave up hope of ever winning the doctor, so she bought passage to the Hawaiian Islands. What a relief it was to all, especially Annabelle, who had to listen to all the slander and put up with her ill-temper because she paid a little more than the others.

The day of the play arrived, to which the whole household had secured tickets, even Mr. Lesser who would not be done out of this show when his "little star" was shining.

"Mother dear, you must help me, for I don't know

whether I can cry as my part calls for when I bid good-by to the unborn children in the Palace of the Future."

"Just feel what you do, dear, for it will be sad to leave the poor little children."

All during the show Mrs. Lesser had to keep a close watch on her husband to keep him from bursting out with applause when Ronile came on the stage, and even then he kept saying, "Gee, that's fine!" When they came to the "Palace of the Future," and Light stood in the center of the group of the "unborn children," one could see the tears glittering on her cheeks like the rhinestones on her garments.

"You see, Molly, she is a born actress," said Mr. Lesser. "My! but that is nice," he continued.

Thus another triumph was entered in Ronile's Book of Life, and after that her teachers gave her all the leading parts in the school plays.

There was a play given at the Scottish Rite Auditorium by the Actors' Club, and the children were chosen from the Normal School. Mr. Reginald Travers conducted the play, which was Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He picked Ronile for a good part, but a number of calls were received by the principal of the school, from protesting parents, telling her that if their daughters were not given better parts they would quit the school.

The principal called for Ronile and said, "I wonder if you would mind if we gave you a minor part this time, for we have so much trouble with the mothers of other girls as the play is given down town."

"I don't mind in the least," said Ronile, anxious to help her principal.

"But will your mother be satisfied?"

"She will not mind, for mother always said you were my authority while I am in your charge, therefore, you know what is best and mother knows you do the best you can at all times."

"That is very sweet of her," she replied much relieved. "I wish all mothers would feel that way. What a help it would be to us teachers, but their constant interference makes it hard for us at times," she said as she dismissed the pupil.

Then she went to the telephone and called up Mrs. Delien, saying: "I want to compliment you on the spirit with which you have brought up your daughter. It is such a treat to meet such pupils, and I am so charmed that I had to tell you what a wonderful spirit she displayed. It is the home training that counts and reflects on the mothers. We cannot teach them such manners in a few school hours, if they don't have the proper training at home. I want to talk to you some time before school closes," said the principal.

"Do come and see me," said Mrs. Delien.

"Ronile," said one of the girls as she ran after her one day, "I saw the principal go into your house; did she go to see your mother?"

"We live in a boarding house and there are teachers there, too," came the short answer.

"But that way you become a teacher's pet. Gee, I wish I were you," said the other with a jealous ring in her voice.

"You need not do that to become a teacher's pet; why are you not behaving?" said Ronile, wisely. "If all the children were good they would all be pets and the teachers would be happier and more patient."

"I often try to be like you," said the other admiringly, "I like the way you walk. I heard one teacher remark to another how trim you were and that you had just as good a time as the tomboys, and better."



"Jesus, loving Saviour, only Thou dost know
What may befall her as she onward goes;
So I humbly pray Thee, take her by the hand,
Lead her ever upward to a better land."

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TEACHER'S AUTOGRAPH

Vacation drew near, and the Woman's work grew slack. Ronile received an autograph album from the teacher. All wrote pretty verses in it, however, reserving the front page for the mother to write on. "Let us see what she writes," they said.

After lunch Ronile came back with the small book in her hand, every little while stopping and turning a page to read the little notes from the different friends at the house. She walked to the teachers and handed them the book with a happy smile. They opened it at the first page. Ronile's picture, a snapshot when she was a baby, was cut out and carefully pasted at the top. The date was then written, "San Francisco, April 30, 1916," and the mother's writing filled the page. It ran thus: "Jesus, loving Saviour, only Thou dost know what may befall her as she onward goes; so I humbly pray Thee take her by the hand, lead her ever upward to a better land. When I have departed from the road of life, then beg Your Blessed Mother to guide her through all strife. If the tide of pleasure carries her from the good, Heavenly Father help her—I know He would. Your loving mother's prayer, Amen."

The teachers stood wistfully looking at one another, then the principal said: "I just knew she would write something like that. She is just the sort to put Ronile solely into God's hands." Thus saying she turned the page.

On the next page, a heart was drawn in the center and on it was written, "Dear Lord, please grant my mother's prayer, that I may be a good girl always. Your faithful little sheep, Ronile."

"How sweet," said the principal, bending down and kissing Ronile; the others following her example. They kept the book until after school, adding more verses to those already written in the little book for a happy, bright and worthy future.

"Now, dear, don't forget the Normal School, if you should have to go east as mother anticipates. Be as good as you have been here," was the final cheer from those good women who take our children and mold their minds to fit for the storms that arise in life's journey.

May passed and June came. A few flowers were ordered. Letters came from the east begging them to return. One day a large envelope arrived, stamped Kenwood, from Ruth. "What can it be? She never writes such large letters." Opening it they found a large sheet of paper folded many times, and in the very center were the tiny words written: "Come back. Will tell you the rest." A longing for a home seemed to overcome them. It dawned on them that their life was a lonely one in spite of all the birds and flowers.

"Look, mother, how dry the hills are, and think how nice and green everything is in the east now." So the Woman went to Mrs. Smith telling her of an intended visit east.

"Well, we will see what our silent friends have to say," said the medium. They sat in a darkened room and put a trumpet on the table, and some flowers.

The Woman prayed, then they sang: "Sweetly falls the spirit message from the home beyond the tide; ever do we bid them welcome, dwellers from the other side. Welcome, loved ones, we are waiting to receive a word of cheer, ever do they give us comfort 'mid our toilsome journey here." While they sang loud voices of men were heard from the trumpet. A powerful voice called the Woman by her first name, and spoke of her past life which the Woman knew no one but herself had any knowledge of.

Then a child's voice spoke sweetly, "Oh, my darling mother, I am so glad you came."

"Should we go east?" asked the Woman.

"Yes, mama, you will have to and when you get there, go to Kenwood for a short time only. You will have to settle in New York and do the spirit work as it is the Father's will."

"But, my sweet angel," said the mother, "it is against the law to practice this work; it may lead me to jail."

"What is earthly confinement of steel bars to eternal darkness, my good mother? Light was given you in sorrow, the Father's gift, and you must let it shine to those that are blind for eternal things. You don't want to be a dark lighthouse on the sea of life, where so many get stranded and are watching for the light."

"Cannot their spirit loved ones guide them without a transmitter?" asked the mother.

"No," came the answer, "you must help them for you can see better; you have the eye of foresight that can see the vapor and misty forms because you believe in them and bid them welcome. It is a dangerous post, my dear mother," kept on Valentine. "All preceding prophets were confined in prison, but that developed their inner sight more."

"Would I have to go to prison?" asked the mother in a worried tone.

"Yes," came the answer, "but not for long; just a little while for new sprouts to shoot. There is glory in that sort of confinement and remember, dear mother, it is your vocation; the people need you; the souls need you."

"When shall I begin?"

"You started long ago, only now you must devote all your time to serving at the switchboard of transmission, for remember if you take off the receiver and the other party doesn't answer you cannot get connected—man and spirit. A great comfort awaits thousands when you start to work steadily."

"Where shall I work?"

"We will lead you on; don't worry, for we are always guiding you," the sweet voice ceased with a kiss. Another voice came and sang in Italian: "Oh, Sole Mio," to Ronile. He called her his shining star and that he would guide her in Art.

"I am happy to know you," said Ronile. "Come often."

"When you need me," came the final answer.

"That settles it," said the Woman. "We must leave you good people."

"Oh, but you are going to come back, I feel it, you

are only ordered to work at another station, so go and serve God, who bids you," said Mrs. Smith.

They got ready to leave, much to the sorrow of their friends. Dear Daddy and Mama Handel were inconsolable, wishing they could go.

"Make lots of money," said Daddy Lesser, "and come back for I want you to join me on my next trip to Alaska."

"Our family is growing now; we have Lester, and I don't want to leave Frances, so you will have to go when he starts," said Mama Lesser.

There was a large crowd at the ferry as they left.

"Don't forget to come back, will you?" called Pop Lesser, as the train pulled out.

They went to visit the folks in Nebraska for they all wanted to see that gold medal. Almost everybody in town had to see it in the show case at the drug store. Large auto trips were made through the plains, as this time Ronile was not laid up with the smallpox. After five days they proceeded to Chicago. This time no flowers were made, as the Woman thought of the message and wanted to serve. After a week with their good friends they went on to Kenwood, New Jersey.

"My, you did come at last," said Mrs. Hilbert; "I am so glad for things did not look the same, and we were lost without you."

"No wonder we grew homesick for you. We just had to come," said the happy Woman.

After a few days they had a sitting, and the Woman was told to go to New York.

"There is a place on Central Park west, near the Red Cross Hospital, that is your station," was the message. They went over the next day and found a suitable apartment, two rooms facing the Park. She procured her furniture and waited to see what would present itself, making flowers in the meantime to keep up all expenses.

CHAPTER XXIX

POOR MADELINE

One day while taking their daily stroll in the park, they saw a girl sitting on a partly hidden bench, crying bitterly. The Woman told Ronile to wait as she walked over and listened to the weeping girl.

"Oh, Mother Mary," she sobbed, "can't you help me? I have not a friend in the world." She pulled out a rosary and looked at it with tear-dimmed eyes, then kissed the little cross and held the beads tightly in her hand. She looked toward the lake, her lips set firmly, the muscles in her cheeks twitching at times. She looked at the beads, then at the water.

"Oh, she contemplates suicide," thought the Woman, so she walked over to the girl, who jumped up and started to leave the bench, but the gentle touch of the Woman held her back. A look of love and pity sought her eyes. "You poor little girl," said the Woman, "you are in trouble."

"Yes," said the girl, sobbing anew, and looking toward the lake.

"I know what you wanted to do, but God doesn't want you to throw your life away, at least not while you stick to this," she said pointing to the beads. "Keep up your faith, and tell me why you are so sad."

"Oh, I can't tell you," answered the girl with another outburst of sobs.

"Come with me, dear," said the Woman.

"If you knew, you would not want me," she sobbed.

"If I knew?" said the Woman consolingly, "I do know and you are going with me. After you feel like telling me all, for whatever it is you are in trouble, I am going to help you. We are not looking for your weakness; we are looking for a way to help you. Now, cheer up, dear; all is well now; just forget to-day."

They led her out of the park, Ronile and her mother walking on either side, Ronile taking the girl's hand as if to say, "I will help you, don't worry." Her name was Madeline, she said, when they got to the Woman's home.

She had been working at general housework, and her mistress had a son who had paid her lots of attention, and said he would marry her.

"Now I am ruined," she said, "and they sent him away and threw me out without even paying me the money that was coming to me. What shall I do now?"

"There is a way out of all predicaments; where does this woman live, Madeline?" said the Woman tenderly.

"Not far from here."

"I will go to her and see that you get your belongings and the money she owes you."

"But you can't carry the heavy suit case," said Madeline.

"Well, if you want to come along, you can help carry it." They went. It was a large elevator apartment house. The Woman was received by the Madam herself who, seeing Madeline behind the Woman, flared up like a fighting rooster.

"What you want, you wicked goia?"

"I want to talk to you first," said the Woman, as she walked in, pushing Madeline with her, and then closing the door.

"This is a private matter just among us three. What we want is the money she earned and her clothes." The Madam was a get-rich-quick Jewish lady who spoke with a broad Russian dialect.

"Nodding of de kind; I vill not gif her money, when she got de best of mine son!"

"Your son!" said the Woman sharply. "Who is carrying the wages of sin? This poor, innocent girl who came into your household to give you comfort, not knowing the difference of sex. No love was shown her and your son took advantage of her, pretending love and her young heart went out to him. Why, no wonder there was no love shown her by you, and she believed in him. Why, you both belong in the State Prison."

Here the Madam went back a step, then pointing at Madeline, her thick finger shaking treacherously, "So-oo, you had to go to de police. Dad's de tanks you get for takin' a greenhorn in your house and gif dem too much good things to eat. Oi, vy vus I good to you?" thus she walked off, getting the money and then came

back, handing it to the Woman, giving poor Madeline a fierce look as she passed her. Then she motioned for her to get her things, but went with her, saying, "I don'd trust you, vunce a thief always a thief."

"What did she steal?" asked the Woman, trying hard to keep composed.

"Mine son!" she shrieked.

"Too bad about your son," said the Woman, a contemptuous curl around her lips. "Is not he the thief, to take from a mere child her youth, faith in mankind, her virtue, her fortune? Who wants a broken flower that is picked and thrown by the wayside? I tell you if I were the judge, he would never pick another flower. Now, Madam, you will kindly give me the address of your son, for he, too, has a claim on a growing plant and must help care for it."

"Mine son is not in America; he is a soldier by now."

"Uncle Sam can be proud of you, Madam, and of your son. Now I want a check to cover the expenses of the lying-in hospital."

"Vat!" she cried, "I pay for her bleasure?"

"No, you will pay for her sorrow; otherwise the court will present a bill which might surprise you."

"Oi, tomorrow is Shabes; I can do nodding; vat shall I do!" she whimpered.

"You give her a check for a thousand dollars. You know it takes time for a mother to recuperate. The bills will be carefully presented to you."

"I von't do nodding; I vill ask mine son-in-law to help me; he is a lawyer."

"Then he can tell you that the law will compel you to pay all expenses and three dollars a week until the child is of age." The Madam stood still, her lips moving as if she was trying to figure out what the amount would be.

"Ven is the child of age?" she asked.

"At eighteen years," was the reply. "Did you figure rightly, that you are coming off easy?" asked the Woman.

"Can't you wait until mine husband comes home?"

"No, did your son wait until she was of age?"

"Those children; what a trouble for a mother! A thousand dollars, Och!" She went for a check book and thought a minute, then she threw up her hands, saying, "I can't write, so dere."

"You can read?" said the Woman.

"All right," she said, shaking her head, "sure."

"Well, then, I will make out the check, and you will sign it," said the Woman.

The Madam looked at Madeline again and her brow wrinkled as she said, "Vy did you come to mine house; such trouble, vot I never haf before! Oi, you luder, you goia," here she looked at the Woman for help. "Oh, Missus, please, is dere no way to fix without to pay the thousand dollars?"

The Woman shook her head and said, "No."

"All right! Oi, if papa comes home; a thousand dollars for a goia like her."

"She only has the pain out of it," said the Woman; "you ought to know that as a mother, and the thousand dollars is for your grandchild, you know."

"Oi," here she swallowed hard, then broadened out her hand and reached to her throat, despairingly. "Me, de grandmother of a draifa, a Gentile? Never! I hope it dies. God de gerechte, vy you hurt me so?"

"Your son did not consider a Gentile," said the Woman unmoved.

An idea seemed to strike the Madam as she looked at Madeline, and she said: "But suppose she die! Then de thousand dollars!"

"Don't worry," came the answer assuringly, "if that was the case, the city would not be inclined to pay for the consequences of your son's pleasures."

The Woman asked for a piece of paper, then took a fountain pen out of her purse, while Madeline brought her her writing box to give her a sheet of paper for the required note. The Woman wrote thus: "This is to certify that my son, Aaron Plotsky, is the father of Magdalena Wariasch's child, and I pledge myself to pay one thousand dollars for confinement expenses and further care for said child."

"Put your name here," said the Woman.

Mrs. Plotsky shrugged her shoulders and a worried look came over her face. "But suppose you cheat me?"

"Very well," said the Woman, "you put on a hat, and we will go to a Notary Public; he can read it for you. After a while Mrs. Plotsky returned to the room, a costly satin coat thrown over her house-dress and they went to an undertaker's place who was also a notary. The Woman handed him the paper to be written on a legal sheet and stamped. While this was being done, the Madam looked at a casket, then at Madeline, her hand crossed in what seemed a prayer. After writing the statement on a typewriter, the gentleman read it aloud.

The Woman watched the unwilling grandmother-to-be and said, "Are you ready to sign?"

"Och, mine Gott, vy must I be in such trouble? All right," she said, shrugging her shoulders and taking the pen, wrote very awkwardly, turning the pen at every letter, but finally succeeding in writing her name, "Rachel Plotsky." The gentleman wrote the word "Mother" underneath, then signed his name and handed it to Mrs. Delien, who also signed it. He put the paper in an envelope and handed it to Madeline, who stood shivering.

"Take good care of that," he said.

"Now," said the Woman to Rachel Plotsky, "let this gentleman make out the check." Realizing that there was no way of getting out of it, she pulled the check book out of her spacious bag and handed it to the gentleman, who made out the check for one thousand dollars to Magdalena Wariasch, and again asked the distressed Jewish woman to sign her name.

As she went out she gave the three a sweeping glance which rested on Madeline, and she stuck her finger close to the poor girl's nose, saying, threateningly: "Nefer in your life come unter mine eyes, vat you make me trouble, I never haf in all mine life. A thousand dollars for a goia like her."

She went home talking to herself, then called her son-in-law on the telephone, telling him in an excited

voice that a police woman came and made her give up a thousand dollars.

"For everything?" asked the son-in-law, not much alarmed.

"Vot you call eferything? That fresh goia got a fortune! Just tink, Aby, a thousand dollars!"

"You got off cheap," came the laconic answer. "You should be glad it did not get into the papers. Those things are no credit to a family that employs hundreds of girls in a shop, so the least you say about it the better you are off."

"All right, Aby, good-by," and a deep sigh rang through the phone. Then she went and sat down, her head resting on her hands.

The Woman took Madeline to the bank, depositing the check in trust for her mother, Rosa Wariasch, in Moravia.

"Ah, my mother, if she knew," cried Madeline.

"Your mother is a woman, and you are her child; she will gladly forgive you when you get there. This money will give you a good start."

"If it were not war-time, I would go home now," she sighed. "But Austria! I have not received a letter from home in two years. My brothers are in the army; they may be killed," she said with a worried, distant look.

"No, my dear, I am sure they live, for if they were in spirit I would have seen them around you."

Madeline stayed with the Woman for a few days, then went to the hospital, Mrs. Delien visiting her daily. All went well. A curly-haired, black-eyed baby boy lay at her side one day as the Woman entered. This day she brought white carnations for her.

"You were right," said Madeline, all smiles, her sorrow forgotten, "it is a boy."

"There you are," said her friend, taking the tiny hand in hers as she blessed the baby. "Your sorrow has turned to joy, and life looks doubly charming to you, as you have here a little sprout to care for. May God bless and give him keen sight and a just course to follow!"

"But the world will condemn him," said Madeline, looking tenderly at her baby.

"No, my dear, for some of our greatest men were illegitimate. A child of this kind generally has a better nature, as it becomes more intuitive, because the mother shunned by others, envelops herself solely in faith, and thus the child has the advantage of spiritual foresight." So saying she looked at his head, and studied it carefully. "He has a fine head and will stand his ground. The Jewish blood in him is to his advantage; it gives him energy to put his shoulders to the commercial wheel and give his mother a splendid, comfortable future."

"You think so?" asked Madeline, who with her sixteen years looked more like a baby herself than one that must carry the burden of two. Madeline clasped her hands and looked up to the ceiling, as if in prayer, while the baby held the Woman's finger tightly clasped in his tiny hand as if to hold on to her. Another prayer went up to the Father as a thrill ran through the Woman's heart when she felt the pressure of such a tiny holder. Thus they were silent for some time each sending messages to the Father through another current.

"Give them their daily bread and forgive her her trespasses as she forgives those who trespass against them, and lead her out of temptation and deliver her from evil, for Thou art the Father who sees all and helps the weak with spiritual strength."

Madeline's eyes that were riveted so long on one spot slowly turned to her friend and she said, "God surely sent you to me, for if you had not come that day in the park I would be lost now and I am so happy for I have some one to love."

"Yes, your dear baby takes a big part in your life, and you have something to work for. He is healthy and some day will have a father. I saw it as if in a vision. Before he can walk two strong arms will rock him to sleep." A blush swept over the face of Madeline. Then a hunted, worried look came into her eyes.

"The wages of sin," thought the Woman. "It leaves its footprints and drags the victim over that road of tor-

ture daily, until faith has the upper hand and leads them through to a strange land of forgetfulness."

"Do you think a man would love my baby and me?" asked the little mother.

"Why not?" asked her friend. Here she took a white carnation and handed it to the patient. "You are like this, still sweet and good. You are suffering the consequence of love too freely given in a promise to lead you onto the road of matrimony which resulted in your being cast by the roadside and left there. Your sin has turned to love through faith. His sins hound him and drive him on a raft of danger to a shore black from destruction and puts his head into a harness of compulsion. A victim driven by an iron hand with a skull for its banner. So don't worry; you are the winner of the two. Your faith helped you, therefore never forget the gentle spirit called faith."

"I would not want him as a husband," said the girl-mother, as she lifted her eyes toward the ceiling; "his mother will always throw that up to him, even if he should live and come back from the army."

"Let us not talk about him now; he is serving his country, not as a hero, however, but as a fugitive from this," and she pointed to the dear little form that snuggled in his mother's arms and smacked his lips in a hungry fashion.

"I must leave you now," said the Woman rising and kissing the mother and telling her not to worry, that all would adjust itself to good advantage. She smiled at the nurse who was coming in to attend the patient and left.

The nurse smelled the flowers, then said: "Is the lady a relative? She is the only one who comes to see you."

"No, it just seemed as if God sent her to me in my trouble," said the girl and she told the nurse of all the Woman had done for her.

"Is she a medium?" the nurse asked eagerly.

"I don't know what you mean," said Madeline.

"Does she tell you about spirits?"

"Yes, she told me all about my sisters and brothers

who died; their names and my home; she told me how it looks and who was there," said Madeline, "and by the way she told me, I know she could see it, and I know my mother and father live and my two brothers who are in the war."

"Then she is a medium," said the nurse, convinced. "I am very much interested to know if my friend is safe in the Canadian Army in France; do you think she would give me a reading?"

"I don't know," said the mother, holding the baby to her breast while the nurse assisted her. "Why don't you ask her? Or I will if you want me to."

"Oh, I can hardly wait!" said the nurse. "How I have prayed! If he only comes back, for I have no parents and we wanted to get married as soon as he started his practice."

"Is he a doctor?"

"Indeed, he is," said the pretty nurse, proudly.

"Has your friend a telephone?"

"Sure."

"Then I will call her up."

"Yes, that is best for she is nice and will help you," said Madeline.

The baby was asleep by this time, so the nurse put him in his basket-bed, gave Madeline a glass of milk and told her to go to sleep. Then she went to the phone and called up the Woman.

"I am Madeline's nurse," she explained, and the Woman thinking something had happened to Madeline, asked, "Yes, but she is well?"

"Oh, yes, but I wanted to know if you could see me this evening. Madeline tells me you helped her so wonderfully. I believe greatly in spirit power." Here she broke off, saying, "You know."

"All right, I will see you," answered the Woman.

"May I bring another nurse?"

"Yes, you might as well," came the answer. "So this is the way my station opens up, through Madeline, and faith, hope and charity," thought the Woman.

The next morning when the nurse came on duty she

was all smiles and told Madeline how wonderfully the medium brought her dear mother and father and described everything concerning herself so minutely.

"I am so happy, you dear little thing, that you came here. I know now where to talk with my good mother and am so happy."

"No more than I am," said Madeline, forgetting all her troubles.

"Do you know," said the nurse, "there are four other nurses going up this evening; some wanted to go this afternoon but she wants to come and see you. Now you see," said the nurse, patting her patient affectionately, "she likes you so much she would not make the appointment. We asked her the charges," continued the nurse, "and she said there were no charges, but we always pay one dollar for a reading so we just laid that amount on the table."

"Oh, I am so glad you did, for she has not much money, and I know she has a daughter to support."

"Well, she is all to the good," said the nurse, satisfied.

After two weeks Madeline came back, but the Woman was busy; people even came in the mornings. There were nurses and their friends, and relatives; one told the other and the Woman's popularity spread rapidly.

One morning a lady came from Elmhurst. She was an aunt of one of the nurses, and said her niece had told her all about her.

"But we are busy with the baby," said the Woman.

Going over to the little fellow the lady remarked, "What a fine child he is!" and looking at the pale little mother, said she ought to be in the country.

"That's the place for her," said the Woman, "but we don't know where to find the place that God has reserved for this splendid specimen of mankind to grow."

"I would not mind having them in my home," said the lady; "we have our own home, my husband is gone all day and it would be grand just to have them around."

We have chickens and our neighbors are farmers, and we get our milk cow-warm; that would help her."

The Woman noticed that the lady spoke with a foreign accent and asked her if she were an Austrian, anxious to link Madeline to the stranger, as she felt that in time of need people speaking the same tongue connect better.

"Yes," said the lady, proudly, "straight from Vienna."

"There is a country-woman of yours," said the Woman, pointing to Madeline, whose eyes sparkled as the lady came over and kissed the pale cheeks of the little child-mother. She then took Madeline's hands in hers and said as only a mother could say to a lost child, "Will you come and live with me?"

The girl looked at her friend, then at the stranger, who seemed so closely related and said, "Yes, I love you and the country for I was born on a farm and like it better than the city."

"This is a Godsend for you, Madeline," said the Woman, "and you will be happy with this lady."

"My mother came from Vienna, too," said Madeline, "but she met my father when he was a soldier and went with him on his farm in Moravia."

"What is his name?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"Stephan Wariasch," said Madeline willingly.

"Why, that is my stepbrother; my father married twice; my stepmother had this boy Stephan and his grandmother left him the farm in Moravia."

"Then you are Madeline's step-aunt—really no blood relation but a wonderful coincidence. How finely the silent weavers spin the thread that bind together the long lost and unhappy wanderers. I am so glad, dear Madeline, that you have found the only relative you have in this country."

"My father always asked in his letters if I had found any trace of my Aunt Mitzi," said the girl. "He spoke so much of you."

"Yes, we loved each other very much and he was a good brother, and I never missed my own dear mother

when my stepmother and Stephan came to our home. Now, you will have to come and live with us," she said smiling at Madeline. "I am getting old and long to have a little bundle like that to rock and care for."

"Have you no children?" asked Madeline.

"A son; but he is always away; he drives a machine for a rich gentleman. They are now in Saratoga. I really have nothing from him as he is seldom home. My daughter died at the age of ten with scarlet fever. But now, thank God, I will not be alone in the future, for I have another daughter," she said putting out her arms to receive Madeline.

They packed Madeline's belongings and phoned for a taxi. "We are not so poor and besides the baby might get too much wind, and the subway air would not be good for him." So Madeline and little Stephan, for that was the name she had given him at the hospital, thinking of her father and naming the baby after him, went into a real home and the following Sunday Ronile and Mrs. Delien attended the christening. Stephan William was the name finally decided on, as the aunt said he would have her son's name, too. "I see so little of Willie, and we want to feel as if he were our baby all over again."

It was a happy birthday party, one candle burning before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, who held the little Saviour in her arms.

"Oh, Mother," said Ronile, "I saw this statue once before in the church in Reno."

"Yes, dear," said the Woman, "but let us rejoice in this and thank the Good Mother of Jesus for it was she who helped Madeline find this lovely home."

They were all seated at the table eating the delicious paprika chicken and noodles.

"How lovely!" said the Woman.

"Yes, it is my Willie's favorite dinner, and it is too bad he is not here," said his mother.

"I feel him very close," said the Woman with a distant look, and before long they heard the sounds of an automobile horn and in rushed the young man, tall and stately with dark curly hair and dark eyes which were

almost black. A row of perfect teeth showed as he smilingly asked, "What's all this?"

"A surprise," said his father, getting up to greet him. "Your mother found her brother Stephan's daughter and we are having a party." Madeline blushed to her ears as she looked over and he drank in the beauty of that tender little form. Her skin was like a lily. The boy became interested. His mother laid her hands on his shoulders and kissed him; then she introduced him to the guests.

"This surely is a surprise," he said, as he shook hands with all and then went to clean up, as he had driven from Saratoga. They all waited for their dessert, while the mother warmed up his dinner. He soon came back, looking quite refreshed and indulged heartily in his favorite meal.

"This is a good chicken; which one did you kill?" he asked looking at his father. "I hope it wasn't my pet Nicky."

"No," said the elderly gentleman, pulling the ends of his mustache, "he vill have to die of old age." After the son had finished, the mother served a delicious looking apple strudel.

"How you like dat?" the old gentleman asked Madeline. "Remind you of home?" It was indeed a homecoming, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Oh, I didn't want to make you cry! I shust vant to make you happy, so don't cry, my little girl, you must all time laugh, you know vy," he said pointing meaningly to the baby's room. "Dat make bad milk." It was the very thing that made the tears chase each other and drop on the white hands.

Willie, the son, looked somewhat puzzled, then he said, "Catch me crying when I see strudel."

"It sure is strudel (whirlpool in German) she cries about," said the father. "You know, the kind of strudel in the water dat pulls you down."

He looked at his son as he sipped his coffee, then said wistfully, "Willie, my boy, I want to talk mit you on someting vat is going to stop dem tears." He went

to a humidor and took out two cigars, handing one to his son, who later struck a match and lighted his father's cigar and then his own. After taking a few puffs he took his son by the arm and led him upstairs into the baby's room. He pointed to the little bed where the tiny pink-skinned baby was cuddled with his little fists pressed tightly to his lips sucking away for dear life. "Dat's vy she cry," he said simply, but with a volume of meaning. He took a vigorous puff at his cigar but realizing that this was no place to smoke he went to the window and pushed the curtain aside to blow the smoke out. Coming back he looked searchingly at his son, saying, "If I ever lay my hand on him, he von't have time to say coo coo."

"Who is the scoundrel?" asked the son, between his teeth.

"A Jewish fellow where she vorked."

"Where is he now?"

"In the war fighting like a gentleman-hero."

One could hear Willie's teeth grind as he looked at the baby, then out of the window into space, his cheek bones twisting convulsively.

The grandpa, as he was proud to be called, never was happier than when on coming home from work and after eating his dinner Madeline would bring the baby and say, "Go to Grandpa."

"Ya, Ya," he would say. "Come you little brave fellow dat never cries."

He bent over him now and noticed how wide-awake the baby was, sucking on his fists. Then he took out his watch and said excitedly: "My, it is three hours past, no wonder dat little fellow is hungry, and he don't cry. But nefer mind, my little baby, Grandpa will get your mama to give you some dinner. Ya, Ya," thus he left the surprised son as he went to the stairs and called Madeline. "Lenche! Madeline! Come quick; the baby wants you."

"All right," said his wife. "She is coming; tell Willie to come down."

"I am coming, mother," and he passed Madeline on

the stairs. A look of pity swept over her as she timidly climbed the stairs. He wanted to take her in his arms but there was something between; just love. That something was placed there for a purpose, he thought, that reminded him of someone else, a thief so great.

"If I ever get my hands on that scoundrel, I will squeeze the last drop of blood out of him," he thought.

"See, Willie," said his mother, "take an example from this poor girl, she is yet a baby herself and already ruined." Pointing toward the parlor, where Ronile was playing the "Hungarian Rhapsody" for her mother, she said: "That lady found her in the park, where she wanted to drown herself, and took her home. So God led her to us, the only relative we have here. Even if Stephan was not my real brother, his mother became my mother and that made us sister and brother. Willie, my boy," she said as she wiped her eyes on her snow-white apron, "never ruin a girl, promise me that."

He held her sweet wrinkled face in his hands, and kissed her trembling lips as he said: "Forbidden fruit is sweet at first, but has a bitter after-taste. I have not been an angel, mother, but when I see that poor little innocent baby sucking at his fists, I feel as if I wanted to fight somebody."

They listened a minute to the music. "My favorite piece," said the boy as they walked into the parlor, where he took out his violin and accompanied Ronile with great skill. The grandpa came in smiling, and drank in the strain of the music like a desert wanderer reaching an oasis.

"That's what I call music," he said; "I like it. So happy I am, Dunnerwetter, I could dance a czardas. Even our little boy likes the music. He looks as if he understood it already." Then an idea struck him, and he walked into the hall, calling, "Lenche, bring the baby down." The old gentleman talked of nothing but the baby and how smart he was, and slapping his knee, he said, "I bet, by Christmas, he can beat the drum."

After awhile Madeline came back with the baby. She walked over and laid the precious little bundle on

grandpa's lap. He beamed with pleasure, as he clumsily tried to hold him in a comfortable position.

"Ja, dat is the best place in the world for the little feller. Anybody who hurts a hair on your head won't be able to say coo coo when I get through with him."

"I never saw my father with a baby and it sure looks funny," said Willie.

"Sure you never saw me hold you, you wild flyer, you never would stay one minute in one place."

Thus closed the curtain of another perfect day, thought the Woman, as they went home and thanked the Father as she looked at the starry heaven. "Another sorrow has turned to joy and vibrates happiness abundantly through Thy grace, good, great, loving Father."

Time passed; the Woman's work grew; her living and dining rooms were filled with people. They wrote to her for tests and her walks were much shortened for want of time. As the sun was sinking over the western horizon, with a book under her arm, she walked daily to the highest point among the hills in the park. Few visitors were there at that time. There she sat with crumbs to feed the birds and squirrels who knew her, and greeted her with their happy chirps. When the evening star became visible she would slowly walk home, drinking in the wonderful, invigorating air in deep breaths. She was ready to transmit the silent, eager souls to those who were waiting patiently for the communion.

CHAPTER XXX

TOMMY SHOWS HOW MUCH ALIVE HE IS, EVEN THOUGH HIS BONES ARE RESTING IN FLANDERS FIELD

One day a girl with a shifting, uneasy look in her eyes came to the Woman and said, "I'll pay you well if you bring him back to me." The Woman seemed unconcerned at the remarks, opened a book of Scripture, and read intently. Then she took the girl's hand and looked sadly into her eyes, saying, "The one you want is not for you to claim; he belongs to another woman who bore his children."

"Yes," said the girl, "she is my friend; we went to school together."

"How can you be her friend when you deceive her?"

"She doesn't know it," said the girl, showing no emotion.

"He has a son in the war and that son is dead," said the Woman, and she accurately described him, continuing, "This boy is keeping his father away from you."

"It seems so," said the girl, "for ever since the son went his father has dropped me."

"Why? Because he is afraid God will punish him by taking the boy away from him. Then the man tried to do justice to his family."

"Well, he will have to do justice to me, too," said the girl, in a sobbing voice.

"Did you not know all this while he was your friend's husband? And then you want me to invoke holy spirits to help you? It is impossible, but I can pray for you that the departed members of your family can assist and give you strength to give him up. For remember, the spirit of his son will never let the father deceive his mother who trusts you."

"How can he prevent it," asked the girl defiantly, "when he is dead?"

"But his spirit is alive and very active; otherwise I could not see him so clearly. He died a sacrifice on the altar of war, therefore, he can help and is free to do so."

"Then you don't think he will come back?"

"No, you might as well try to reach for the man in the moon. I see the boy shake his head."

"My! Tommy dead! His mother will feel terrible," said the girl.

"Are you not sorry for the friend who will weep out her sorrow on your shoulder, with this boy at your side? Well, then, try; you can, for your mother will help you to overcome. She was a good, pious woman and her message is this: 'Don't commit adultery, for you will wrap on the Master's soul.' Your mother would rather have died at the stake than do what you have been doing for five years."

"How do you know it has been five years?" asked the girl, uneasily.

"Your mother told me and she knows, my dear."

"Do you think she saw everything?"

"Indeed she did, for God is not so selfish as to take your mother into the Great Beyond and let her play on a golden harp when you needed her to watch and guide you." Here she took the girl's hand and patted it gently. "It took a long time for the soul of your poor mother to reach you and have her message transmitted to you. Now you will have strength to overcome for your good mother has the power to guide you."

"Is she happy?" asked the girl in a choked voice.

"If you live the right life she will be," came the prompt answer.

"Does she know I burned candles and had masses read?"

"Yes, she is happy about that—the thought and attention you gave her—but it was tainted money that paid for them, money which belonged to your best friend and it worried your mother; made her very sad. If I were you, dear, I would get work in another city until you have overcome."

"I can't do that, especially when Tommy is dead; my friends need me," said the girl.

"You won't be much comfort if your intentions are deceiving, my dear, therefore I would try and go. Your

mother and Tommy will console your friend. She had to bargain with death as she made him enlist in the Canadian Army."

"It is her country, that is why," said the girl.

"But he went to kill another mother's son. Such is war. We want it, we mothers who raise sons; if we did not there would be no war to come and things would be settled without the killing of each other's children. We call the Indians savages and scalpers. Why, we are no better; in fact, a great deal worse, because the Indian would not betray a friend. He is truthful, but the pity of the white race today is that of telling lies. The biggest liar is the popular man. It is not alone that you deceived your friend; her husband did, too."

"If he hears of Tommy, who was his pride," said the girl shivering.

"We must never challenge our pride. Death is only transition; he harvests the blossoms of life and we, after all is over, seek the bones and mourn at the graves and make up for what we could have done before. The day will come, my dear, when spirit-guiding will have the upper hand and will prevent slaughter."

"I could listen to you all day," said the girl. "How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing," was the answer. "When you can look me straight in the eyes, when your soul is free, which I hope will be soon, then you come and see me again."

"But do take something," said the girl. "I have taken your time and time is money; you have to live."

"Yes, but I could not enjoy your money; just try hard; your mother will reward me for my time."

"I will try hard, and please tell my mother to help me," said the girl.

"She will," answered the Woman as she closed the door, and a turn in the road opened to a wandering girl who had stolen her happiness and shamefully turned every day to sorrow. There was a difficult turn in the road, a steep and stony path, trodden alone in self-support and self-respect. But the latter now crept slowly over the form into the eyes. One day she came, a look

of happiness in her eyes as she tried to meet the Woman's steady gaze, and succeeded with credit.

"You have won," said the Woman, relieved.

"Indeed I have, and am going to—Oh, but I want you to tell me; I was so happy I almost told you."

"Be married," finished the Woman.

"You got it; he is downstairs," said the eager girl. "If you want to see him, I will call him up."

"Not just yet; I want to talk to you about your future; the past is gone but, oh, there is a wonderful sun shining."

"Does my mother know? You know I see her in my dreams and she is so happy; you surely advised me wisely for if I had not gone away I would never have met him." She handed the Woman a box, saying, "You would not take any money before, but please take this; it was bought with my own money which I earned." The Woman opened the box, which contained a pretty luncheon set.

"My fiancé selected it," said the girl proudly. The Woman admired the beautiful linen tablecloth and napkins.

"We will have a cup of tea and use it at once; get your friend," said the Woman, "while I make the tea."

Soon the alcohol stove was burning under the five o'clock teapot, and when the betrothed couple came in, a melodious humming of the heating water greeted them, giving the room an air of cordiality and comfort.

"When is the happy event to occur?" asked the Woman, after the introduction, as she poured out the tea for the happy couple.

"Next week," they replied. Thanksgiving came from both their lips.

"Will you be married here?"

"No," said the bridegroom-to-be. "In Washington, where my parents live, and we would be very happy if you would come to bless our union." Here he looked lovingly at his chosen bride and said, "My sweetheart here tells me that you are the one who arranged this matter, therefore, we feel that you ought to be present."

"I am very sorry but that day is given to an engagement party," said the Woman, with a happy look in her eyes. "It means a father to a sweet baby, as well as a husband for a dear little girl-mother."

"I suppose you brought this about," said the gentleman, much interested.

"I helped all I could," came the simple answer.

"Is it Madeline; the girl I saw here with the baby?" asked the bride-to-be eagerly.

"Yes, the dear, silent friends have found her only relative in this country—the step-sister of her father, really no blood-relation, but they seem very devoted and are so happy to have found the distressed girl. They have a son, a handsome chap, and he fell in love with Madeline and the baby. They are to announce their engagement on Thanksgiving Day. Therefore, I must go there; you realize that."

"Oh, yes, I am so happy for the little girl, she was the sweetest little thing."

"Will they be married at once?" asked the interested bridegroom-to-be.

"No, they promised a six months' betrothal; they want to marry after Easter, as the young man will have to spend the winter in Florida with his employer. The parents of the young man are Austrians; they believe in a long courtship."

"I could not stand that," said the bridegroom, looking lovingly at his future wife; "could you, sweetheart?"

"I guess not," came the happy answer. The gentleman looked at his watch.

"You are pressed for time," said the Woman rising to go into her test-room, where she summoned the bridegroom's departed relatives and friends. Tommy also came and greeted the new bridegroom-to-be-friend and told him that within one year's time he, too, would be on the battlefield, but that Tommy could help him and try to spare his life, if it was the Father's will.

"Then Tommy thinks this country will declare war?" said the young man, with a wrinkled brow.

"Yes," came the simple answer.

"But the President promised to keep this country out of it," continued the gentleman.

Here Tommy answered: "It is booked in the record of time that a promise is just a shell. The cause is the commercial seed that brings the fruit to our dictators who speculate with human lives on the money market. Columbia will be captivated by his majesty, 'Greed of Finance.' There is a huge fleet resting in our shore's arms. If we cut the cord of present ownership they may belong to us without much cost, except the lives that burn in the commercial furnace. Believe me," continued Tommy, "we are not dead. A new dynasty has been created; we are now getting united in a legion of divine universal brotherhood. Our emblem is the white flag. Our leader that One that never built a church but taught the greatest religion of all—Brotherhood of Man; Love ye one another. The One that never used a weapon. He healed with love in His eyes; made the market place His church and carried His cross to Calvary, just as we carried our guns to kill someone we never knew, and they came to kill us, whom they never knew. We were led by a command of despotism to get the other fellow's hold, making numb the hand that toiled for the bread of innocent hungry babies and wrinkled old faces that are too old to learn the language of the one who might take their lifelong savings in taxes to pay for his grandeur and march into the reigning chair to handle the fate of millions subjected."

"You speak well, Tommy," said the gentleman.

"It is not I alone," came the answer. "There are some here who know more than I do; they help me."

"Then you don't like war?"

"No, we don't like anything that leads to sorrow and destruction. Do you think I am happy here when my mother is crying her eyes out because I don't come back in body? If she only knew how near I am she would stop her grieving, for I am glad I went across the channel of sacrifice. I have worked out a cause that will put my parents in a happy state of union." Here a deep sigh came from the bride-to-be.

Tommy seemed to hear it for he said: "It is all right now; God forgives those who are willing to be forgiven, and gladly lends a hand to those who are earnestly seeking redemption. God bless your union and keep you together, is the sincere wish of Tommy. Good-by."

Thus the test ended and one, who had sinned and was forgiven by trying earnestly to climb the road of self-denial, was led to a height of comfort and happiness where love in true form and real affection met the footsore wandering pilgrim.

"What a wonderful spirit this Tommy is!" said the gentleman, as he carefully assisted his bride-to-be, stepping into their waiting car. "It makes you feel good to have a talk with unseen friends. I will come again," he said, as he stepped on the gas and sped away happily.

A few months later both those people enlisted in the Red Cross service, and went abroad thinking strongly of Tommy to guide them and help ease the suffering brotherhood of mankind.

Another curtain was drawn over these two who were trying to strengthen the tie of love and union by helping others and trying to forget themselves.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CROSS WITHIN THE GUN

It was Good Friday when the great cloud of war swept over the inhabitants on the Island of Refuge—America. It was a wave of fiery hate and mothers paraded in jubilee at the coming death of their sons. The Woman's house was swarmed with anxious forms occupying every chair, waiting patiently for a chance to commune with their departed. It was a war of principle rather than defense for the enemy had not declared war. Like a clever move on a checkerboard, one small device, one word, so fierce and mighty that turns rosy cheeks into a haggard countenance, takes the earners for bread from the homes and lines them up like iron rods that hang a millionfold on the great device. It is pushed into motion by one bony finger and called the principle whereby young lives dangle like the leaves on a tree in autumn, although it is still springtime in their lives.

"Will my son have to go?" asked many a mother. Then the Woman took the Bible and read and talked as follows: "'And men will stir up evil thoughts among your kin, and they will hate you and will give you up to die, and brothers will be false to brothers; sons will stand forth and testify against their own and children will drive parents to the funeral pile.' They will not see the spirit of reason. The son of Israel had time to think on this lonely tour to exile and while the sweeping and roaring grow, he with the master-mind steals the disk from the bony finger that pressed the great machinery, fired by gold, not mind. The prosperous son of Israel denies his hold of Jewish doom, changes his name and religion to coin more freely. While the lower thinks instead of speculates and quietly builds a chain of true steel that links each struggler from the plow to the roaring of the furnace, that great chain is worked out in the dark, not blinded by the light of fame and fortune. It, therefore, has the power of holding and is scattered from every angle of Jewish doom. The man who holds his hands

behind his back, holds firm that chain, and when the speculator is drunk from gain and wealth, resting in arms much claimed by many, that spends the bloody price to adorn the throat of the courtesan with rubies, blood, and diamonds—tears, from hungry eyes. Then at the twelfth hour when drunk with bought affection and comfortably resting within the cushions of wealth, the heavens again will darken—no time to parade at this signal—and the spirit of past sorrow will manifest through the forms of those who still hold claim to the tree of Israel. Like serpents, their moans turning to a hiss, they will spring at the form, making numb the hands that once more build a golden calf and which did not heed the message of the Commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me—'

"The trials in those days cannot be told in words until the Son of God as Son of Man comes forth to claim his chosen brotherhood, as the lamb that beat the lion. Then He surveys the field of life and each will have a pass-key to the gate of freedom into the land of existence, where each one will recognize his claim staked by Him with the sign of the cross and not of the sword. Then the roaring will be transmuted to a breath of contentment, the holy breath carried by unseen messengers to those who hold the cross. A wreath is placed, made from forget-me-nots around the cross, a crown, not of jewels, but thorns that turned through loving memory into a wreath of tender, smiling forget-me-nots. A dove as white as snow will rest on each cross and bring us peace, and over each threshold the inscription will read, 'Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris, quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis, nisi Tu, Deus noster. (Peace give us, oh Lord! in our times for there is no other who would fight for us, but Thee, our God.)'

"There is a resurrection," said a voice out of the Woman; "look to tomorrow with effort for redemption. A resurrection from death is coming as true as the One who went this day to conquer death through ignorance and unbelief. It is He who turns your sword into the cross; all these straight lines in the parade are bearing the cross concealed in their guns. It will fire while he

feeds it with the deadly fuse to challenge the combatants, to charge and pour out the poison blindly because the one behind the danger line gave the command. This is the anniversary of the resurrection of the greatest Prince of Peace who died for love of man, and on this day the lamb is not regarded. Oh, but cruel lion that gnashes its teeth into human flesh! Not in vain went the millions over the river of sacrifice to join Him whose blood has paid for the sins of man. They are also parading above the clouds in that newly created dynasty and will come forth to shield those who recognized the cross within the gun. They with the psychic foresight know when to dodge the bullet and lead them on in faith where the Prince of Peace will show His might as He gathers the fragments of faith and brings them back to the weeping mothers an echo of sorrow. The one who wishes others to starve will slowly feel the grip of hunger stealing around the throat of her own, appealing to the Father who owns all and gives them reason to love one another."

Easter came; the churches were celebrating the great feast of the Resurrection and preparing the pulpit of truth to arouse the spirit of eye for an eye and bloody encounter, to drink the wine and eat the host in memory of the One who bled for just that cause and made a living symbol of love in united brotherhood.

One day Madeline and her mother, as she now called Willie's mother, since their betrothal, came with a look of anxiety on their faces. They put the sleeping little Stephan on the bed and entered the test-room.

"Willie has been drafted," said the Woman after she had read a few pages of Scripture.

"Oh, can't the spirit friends help?" said the anxious mother. "Here we wanted to marry them and now he, my only son, will have to go and kill my sisters' and brothers' sons."

Then Madeline sobbed, "My brothers, too."

"Does God want such an unjust cause?" said the mother. "Here is a man who would make good a wrong another man has committed, and he may join the same ranks as the one who wronged Madeline. How can that be just?"

"Was it just to crucify Jesus who claimed to be only the Son of God?" asked the Woman. "An orthodox today will turn his face from the sight of the statue which represents Jesus, the Nazarene. Although Christ lived a perfect life of the Jewish faith, held their festivals and rites in true Jewish fashion and never tried to change His people's mind in changing their faith, He taught them only healing through faith and power over death by proving spirit return. He died and was buried after Jewish fashion. The Scribes and Pharisees were His enemies, because He tried to make each being a mortal of self-governing capacity, by respecting the law of nature in the law of God."

"But He was baptized," said Madeline. "Jews do not believe in baptism; I lived with them so long that I know all their laws."

"Yet at such times," said the Woman, "they are willing to let a Christian girl wait on them; also at their great feast. You see religion plays a selfish part when comfort is concerned. Christ was baptized to show the symbol of the cleansing of the soul. Water is magnetic. It is the only thing that comes from above, the only thing we cannot duplicate or live without, and He and John knew the power of magnetism in the water."

"Oh," said Madeline. "Then that is why we use holy water at home and have a house blessed before we live in it."

"Evil spirit," said the medium, "must succumb to the power of holy water; that is why we have baptism. If a sin should rest on the soul of a person, that water will cleanse away the mark of sin, if the person has faith in it. Baptism did not bring Christ from His Jewish rites for He did not change them. He loved them but He wanted equality. Man should not think himself superior because he is favored by some particular faith."

"Then you think he should go?" asked the worried mother.

"What else can he do?" came the answer. "Prayer never fails. God will find a place for him, where he will not have to shoulder a gun, even though he serves his country."

"I don't mind his going if he doesn't have to take arms against our people. We make our living here and we want to do our duty in the right way so that we can always face our people."

"You are right," said the Woman. "Your duty to your loved ones is important also; one cannot blame you for that. No one can help the lap he falls into, and no matter how ragged and poor that lap looks, a baby drinks perhaps sweeter milk at such a bosom than the one that fell into the lap of a costly, decorated and paid nurse. A baby's gurgle is the same, regardless of color or race until it is taught to speak, then it begins to differ. It seems to me," continued the Woman, thoughtfully, "if a man wants to adjust a wrong another man committed in giving a name to a baby, God surely will show His mercy and appreciation in sparing his life."

"But he might get wounded and come back a cripple, then Madeline would have more worries," said the mother.

"I would not mind how badly he was hurt if his eyes were spared," said Madeline, her own eyes filling up at the thought of losing him.

"God's mills grind slowly, but sure, dear," said the mother trying to console the little girl-mother. "He brought you to us and for that He had an object; now He won't forget us for we are bound to remind Him each day in faith and prayer."

By this time little Stephan William was giving a demonstration of his lung power. He was a beautiful child with sparkling black eyes and black hair which fell in ringlets about his face. His mother took him in her arms, and he held up to her a ring which Willie had given him.

"Who gave you that?" she asked, to which he replied, "Dada."

"He means Willie," said Madeline with blushing cheeks. Then she asked him, "Where is dada?"

"By-by," he answered, and pointed toward the door.

"If he gets off soon, he will call for us," said the proud mother.

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After a while they heard the tooting of an automobile horn and the baby nearly jumped out of the mother's arms.

"See how he knows him," said Madeline.

Madeline opened the door for Will and before he saw the baby he called out "Atta Boy," and the little fellow answered, "Dada-da." How he reached toward the big, clean boy who wanted to claim and shield him from harm, giving what few others would have deemed just and respectable.

"That baby just knows what you mean to him," said the Woman as she drank in the sight of affection from all sides. "He pays you interest on the deal already."

"That's what I say," said Willie, as he threw the pink and white baby into the air and caught him, kissing the rosy cheeks each time.

"This is God-given happiness, Willie, hold on to it," said the Woman.

"You bet I will," and turning to Madeline he said, "And we will have to get married, sweetheart, for I must go into the training camp on Monday."

With quivering lips the mother laid her hands on his shoulders and looked into his eyes, saying, "God surely will not let you shoulder a gun!"

"He will pray for that," said the son, smiling, meaning the baby as he held him up to kiss the sadness from his mother's face.

Then Madeline said, "Baby, say your prayer." Two little hands folded themselves and two baby eyes were lifted and all that they heard was, "De Dod, da da," but the words contained a volume of meaning.

"Dear God bless daddy," corrected this little mother.

The wedding feast was not so happy as had been contemplated; it seemed that all were depressed but the baby who hung on to his daddy for dear life.

"Dat young fellow knows how to hold on to a good thing," said the grandfather. "If anybody had ever told me that our Willie would have to fight our own people I

never would have believed it. But Willie, there is one over dere dat did harm and ven you lay your hands on him choke him so he can't say coo coo."

"That's the only one I would like to shoulder a gun for," replied the son.

"Now, Willie, don't go with the intention of killing and malice in your heart," said the Woman. "You know how well the Lord has arranged everything. You would never part with the baby; he pays you with his smiles. Now forget the Whys and Wherefores; do your duty at every station, and heed the voice of the Prince of Mercy, and He will lead you all to a happy ending."

"You are right," he said, lifting his bride up and kissing her like the baby.

"Oh, God," he cried, "how I hate to leave you!"

"I'll be here, waiting for you, Willie dear. Our love will bring you back."

"Good for you, Madeline, that's the way to talk. Love will bring him back. Love is the password that leads to God's grace. 'Tis the good ship, Salvation, that cuts through the waves to rescue the souls from their watery grave. He will come back to you," were the final words the Woman said as they left.

CHAPTER XXXII

GOOD FOR EVIL

Some time later, a quite dignified looking lady was announced. She had to wait until the medium had finished a sitting with a girl, and two more ladies were ahead of her.

Seeing the medium escort the girl to the door, the lady came over, saying, "I am in a hurry and must see you at once."

The medium made no move except to say, "These people are ahead of you."

"Don't class me with these servants," said the lady, stamping her foot.

"But, madam, we don't make any class distinction," said the Woman earnestly. "There are no classes in our work, and besides you don't belong in any class that leads to spirit communion. I am afraid, therefore, that you are wasting your time. These girls here are employed and must get back to their work. They are conscientious, and if you cannot wait your turn, I must bid you go."

"I will not go; I must see you," said the other.

"But I did not call you, and you will have to wait your turn if you insist."

"I will wait," said the other with raised head, as she walked toward the window and looked out. After those ahead of her had been dismissed, the Woman beckoned her to enter.

"Now before I start with you," said the Woman, "I must tell you that your visit here was made with evil intention; you came to get evidence against me to have me prosecuted."

"Who told you that?"

"Your cook's mother," said the medium.

"What is my cook's name?"

"Nina, and it was the spirit of your own mother, whose name is Elizabeth, who begged me to see you; that is why you are here." (Here the stranger looked at the Woman in amazement, for no one knew her mother's

name.) "Yes, you were just two years old when she died, in confinement, and that child is with her," said the Woman. "This child is the guardian angel for your daughter, who is about to make a misstep and you know it."

Here the stranger sat down, no longer able to stand on her feet.

"So," said the Woman, "this is the *past* I am telling you about. I don't intend to predict so that you can have me 'put where I belong,' which are the words you said at lunch in the presence of three people around your table. I did no wrong in telling your servant that her mother had been dead for two years."

"Yes," said the stranger, "that is why I became disgusted. She has been crying ever since she saw you and today I got her to tell me why, and I came here to get you for making so much trouble among our servants. I don't intend to put up with a crying servant."

"She doesn't cry for pleasure, madam," said the Woman, sadly. "Her tears are not because her mother is with God and out of the body. She knows better than that. Her tears are because she left her mother in good faith to better herself and her mother, and was willing to make some sacrifices to earn more money; then the gates closed, no letter was received, her savings were sent the last moment and never reached her mother. Then for years she cooked your meals and every bite she ate she felt that perhaps her own people were starving. Her time was spent in giving you comfort and her mother had nothing to eat and no money to buy anything."

"The girl has money saved," said the lady. "She has five hundred dollars' worth of Liberty Bonds."

"Yes," said the Woman, "and you took the credit for that; you did not buy any but took the money from your servant to buy your glory and now you are annoyed that she weeps at the thought that her mother might have starved. If you ladies wanted to do good, why did you not help, when you aided them in becoming naturalized, in also seeing that good will was installed by way of getting a line from home to know who was living and who

was dead? So far the girl has worked for nothing," continued the Woman. "The one for whom the money was intended is no more and you took the honor. Now, madam, go and report me."

"I can't," said the stranger, "I want you to tell me more about my daughter, and is my mother going to help me?"

"When you first came," said the Woman, "I saw your cook's mother and your own mother serving at the same table of righteousness. They cannot help you as long as you are taking the liberty from one who has served you for wages. The wages are hers and you have no power over her. She gave you her services, so don't compel a girl to give up all with which she intended to help her loved ones. You have nothing but grievances from your own daughter. A mother in spirit holds well her own child, but you can never tell where your daughter spent the late previous hours. That is your punishment and your child bears the stain for your sins in taking the freedom from another child, no matter what vocation she had to resort to in search of an honest living. If you had put your arms around that weeping girl and talked to her like a mother who also has a daughter and doesn't know what tomorrow brings for her, the lonely stranger, who has been with you long enough to feel like a member of your family, would have felt that there was someone in the world who was interested in her. Intuitively she knew something was wrong and was led to me for comfort. Then you, the guilty one, come to judge me and take my freedom, although I, too, have a daughter depending on me for the bread I earn for many years. Did not your cook knit more sweaters and socks than both you and your daughter together, and that after she had finished her work of serving you? You took and displayed in public the work of your servant who was classed as a Hun and exhibited it as your own achievement. No good can come from such actions, madam; you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The stranger sighed and said, "I would like to send

my daughter to you," and left without even leaving a coin to cover the time the Woman spent in opening the pages of equality.

"I will not have time to see you or your daughter in future. If they were all like you I could not help anybody; I would have to do other work in order to live." Thus she closed the door and was so exhausted that she had to send the rest of the seekers for truth and love away, although they were willing to pay for the time.

"Tomorrow I will have more strength," said the Woman.

"And she did not pay you anything," said a blue-eyed Irish girl; "and to think how rich she is and took your time."

"It is only the poor who feel the necessity of helping to ease the sting of starvation. Such is the way of the world," said the Woman as she closed the door.

The next day the cook came and told the Woman what a fight she had had with the madam and that she had left her employ. She took a dollar from her purse and said, "I want to pay you for the time my mistress took from you."

"Don't bother; there was a reason for her coming although she did take all my strength."

"Yes, it was the Irish girl who is a waitress next door who told me that my mistress did not pay you anything, and I was so ashamed that I left her. Now she is like a wildcat."

"Well, your time is up there," said the medium, and she walked to the telephone and called up the house-keeper for a very fine lady on Riverside Drive. Coming back she gave the girl the address and told her to go there, as she would have a second girl and the wages would be double what she had been getting.

The next day Nina, the cook, was swinging the kitchen scepter among a lovely lot of domestics. The madam was a lonely widow and happy to get help that were spiritually inclined. One day she herself went to the Woman for a reading. She did not want the house-keeper to let the medium know who she was, and dressed

very plainly, leaving her car at the corner. But Nina's mother was a soul who had power to show her smiling, happy countenance to the medium, thus she helped to identify Nina's new employer, who seemed kind and generous to the lower class. In a short time the medium had linked up this good woman's loved ones and when the husband's spirit came and told her about the sale of the last property and how much she received, and told her not to sell the estate on the Hudson, that he saw a better outlook, and that money was safer invested in real estate than in stocks, the wealthy lady was convinced that there must be something to it.

"Too bad I did not know you before. That was a very good cook you sent me, and I am happy to have such spiritual help. There is a different atmosphere about my place and my health is very much improved."

"Indeed, madam," said the medium, "harmony is the very best medicine for all kinds of ailments."

"You are right, my dear," came the sweet mellow answer, "and I want to make my help happy at home."

"They feel that way now, madam, for every one of them has been to see me, and expressed the wish to remain with you."

"For a time I wanted to close my house, as I don't entertain since my husband died, but now that I am blessed with good domestics I feel it is better to remain."

"It was your husband's advice to each one, to treat you like they would their own mother, as he could reach them and love you through them."

"That is a wonderful arrangement from the Father to let our loved ones come back and help us. Now, Mrs. Delien," said the lady, "I wonder if you would come to my house one evening a week and give us a sitting? It would mean a great deal of comfort to me, and I would sit with my help and you."

"Why, madam! Those were the words your husband said to the housekeeper the other day when she asked him if it was wise to tell you about her communing with departed ones. He said that before a month had passed you would have a circle of your own."

“I am glad he approves of it,” said the lady, smiling.

“Indeed he does. Why, it was his wish,” said the medium, happily. Thus a lonely life was made happy, by going with the Woman to the unfortunate to render help. Many a warm blanket was purchased to cover the thin bodies of the poor. There was another record on God’s great register each day of a good deed added which leveled out the great heights and low, despairing valleys.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE JUDAS OF TODAY

One evening at a sitting all the domestics, the madam and medium were assembled in the luxurious boudoir of the owner. The place was darkened, but on the head of the madam rested a golden light, which rose to the ceiling and then returned. With eager eyes the happy domestics told their lady how wonderful the light was.

"It is the golden beam of good deeds," said a voice. "Each good deed makes a golden vein and gold radiates, making halos around the heads of gentle givers. We make this out of the sunny smiles the madam creates among the earners for bread. Keep this up; it is far better to hold them close in sweet communion and each one of you is represented in spirit. Some were poor in life and are rich in spirit, because they died without a habit and therefore were released. Habit makes a soul earth-bound. The desire is too great and must remain to satisfy, but if they can come into a gathering of this kind they meet the high guides that help them overcome."

"Those are good lessons," said the madam, "and I hope my children here will benefit by them."

"That's one for you, John," said the housekeeper to the butler; "I saw you smoke a cigarette in the garden the other day."

"Yes," said John, "I am trying hard to overcome that habit, and have cut down from a package a day to two cigarettes, one after lunch and one after dinner, and then I go out so that the smoke doesn't affect me so much."

"I am very glad, John, my boy, that you are trying, but if it gives you comfort then keep on smoking your two a day until you feel like giving up without effort. I have noticed when you were serving that your fingers have lost the yellow stain; that is fine; it makes me feel better and gives me more of an appetite."

"Oh, madam, I am so glad I can please you," said John, "and perhaps in a week or so I will give up

entirely." Here the husband's spirit broke in, and said that he himself had to use John to get his habitual smoke, but that he could soon get over it.

"I really like the smell of a good cigar," said the madam.

"And I," joined in the husband; "you have a box of cigars put away among my things, and I want John to smoke them up with me; then we quit. John does not buy good ones, as he has had to send his earnings home to England since his brothers fell in battle."

"You are well posted," said the wife.

"I am, my dear, and John's brothers are both here. They are a hungry bunch, so Nina it is well you prepared a lunch after the sitting."

"Thank you, dear spirit," said the cook, "I am very anxious to please the body and soul."

"That is right; if the masses would think more of the soul than the body, it would make the world a much happier one. Isn't that so?" he said addressing his wife.

"Yes, George dear, I am a different person since I feel you are not altogether gone. I don't even miss your body any more."

"Well, I am glad you put away that crepe stuff; it made my soul feel creepy. Why mourn for something that must be? It is a law the Father made; He changes only our garments and sorrows, then the foolish people weep and blame God."

"It is contrary to habit, dear George," said the wife.

"If people would think out their own ways of radiating happiness, instead of serving at the altar of custom, it would be better all around," continued George. "I am so happy that you are progressing, for after awhile you will not have a medium to help you; then it will be hard for us to communicate; but if you sit regularly you will all see for yourselves, and we can keep our little station open."

"Why can't we keep the medium?" asked the mistress, much concerned.

"It lies in the law of Providence; someone is plotting against her and is trying hard to take her liberty."

"I know who that is," said Nina, "she told me when I left her that she would do it."

"Yes," said the employer in spirit, "the report came in but we made the detective lose the address; some Indian spirit took it right out of her hand; let him tell you."

The voice changed; a strong, guttural voice was talking: "He called the medium squaw, and said if two women came and pretended they were in trouble, one short, stout, blonde hair on top, and dark at the root, the other a tall, dark, thin woman, with a small animal skin around the neck, you watch out; they look to get her. Then another will try and say they are lace-makers."

"Can't you help?" asked the lady in a worried tone.

"Sure," came the powerful answer. "Every time they come in, I will draw a curtain; then she will not get the message."

"Do that," said the kind lady. Then the sitting closed. When the refreshments were being served the lady told the medium to be careful and impressed on her mind the appearance of the two assigned for the medium's arrest.

"Some day I will have to go to jail," said the Woman fearlessly; "I always felt that I would and prayed that God would prevent it until Ronile was old enough to shift for herself."

"Now, my dear," said the good lady, "always feel that you have a friend in me; never hesitate to call on me, for I feel that money alone cannot pay for all the good you have brought into my life. It must be a friendly deed to cooperate with your help. Ronile will always find a home with me, if you should ever be compelled to give up your home for awhile. I don't see why you should, though, for what you do is not against the law. You don't make any charge, and you don't predict, so I don't see what harm can come out of such good work."

"But, my dear madam, why was Christ put in prison? The Scribes and Pharisees were His enemies. They do not want the truth and make laws to prosecute the transmitter."

"Cannot a law be made to protect the medium?"

"Yes, they have the church and if I take out a charter as a reverend, I can call it a church."

"Then why don't you take out a charter?"

"I differ too much in my views and I don't like to be on the platform. They don't like me because I don't charge a fee, and therefore I cannot be classed as one of them. I serve the Father after the mold He made for me. He wishes me to work this way, otherwise He would not let me serve for the good will only."

"He will protect you, I know," said the lady, "and if you ever need a friend call on me any time." Thus they parted with light and heavy hearts mingled with suspense and contentment in having a friend in need. The Father arranges all things so well that when one door closes another opens.

The spirit of George was right, for one day the two ladies described stood at the door, begging to have their fortunes told.

"You are in the wrong place," said the Woman; "I am not a fortune-teller."

"What are you?" asked the stout one, with piercing eyes.

"I am just I, who know that you are after my freedom, but God created both you and me for a purpose—we each serve our mission assigned to us by Fate. Therefore, the Father gave me the warning to see that you are meaning to do me harm; that is why you must resort to cards and have your fortunes told." Thus she gently closed the door, a weakness overcoming her. She heard the ladies go next door and ask the lady when the Woman held her seances.

"I don't know," replied the other and slammed the door. "Why do all these people bother me?" she said as she walked along the hall; "I don't see what harm this Woman does, and every day someone is here trying to get evidence to put her in jail."

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE LIGHTHOUSE BY THE SEA OF LIFE

When Ronile came from school she told her mother that a suspicious-looking man was at the switchboard.

"Mother, the superintendent asked me to tell you that the police are watching the house, and that you should stop helping people, otherwise you will be in danger," she said nervously.

"Everybody is in danger, more or less, dear," said the mother. "Danger of temptation is far greater than that of risking your freedom in doing good."

"Let us move, mother dear, we will have trouble if we stay," Ronile said as she handed her mother some mail.

One letter was postmarked "Fort George, Windsor, N. S., Canada," and read:

"My Dear Mrs. Delien:—

"It certainly gives me great pleasure to avail myself of the favorable opportunity to write you a few lines, detailing a few of the incidents of camp life. I came here four days after saying good-by to you (as you said). I am working in the office, progressing very well, but I have suffered fearfully from vaccination and inoculations, which of course are routine of army discipline, and I am glad to say I am over it all and feel perfectly fine now. There is a wonderful lot of material in the camp for me, and you may be sure I shall make use of it in proper time.

"One thing, however, I must say, and that is that the officers here are really delightful. I seem to do just as I please and am very well thought of. But I can assure you there never lived a more disgusted and forlorn man in the world than myself during the first week. First the inoculations, one of which made me unconscious for some time; and then having to sleep on the ground; then the food, which was distasteful to me; really I cared little whether I

lived or not. Oh, how I thought of Job and how pleased he felt when it was all over! Really his life has been mine, for now I am perfectly well and happy.

“The weather here is dreadful, wet and gloomy and cold sometimes, and we already have frost. I think of you every day and pray for you. Words cannot tell how much you have made me love my prayers. After believing there was no hereafter, you called me, in a few minutes, back to God and my beloved Jesus, which tempers the mind; and again the army training has made my body perfect, so you can imagine the change. Yes, my dear sister, I shall return to New York and have my first visit with you. Somehow I feel the presence of my dear wife with me every night. Would that I could see her and speak to her as you do because I do love her so much.

“Next week we expect to embark for Europe, but we have been delayed twice. We were all ready last week and then we were marched back to our tents. Now I am really wondering whether we shall go at all. Have you, my dear lady, heard from the boys that went ahead of me? I shall be very glad indeed to have a few lines from you telling me how you have been since I last saw you. Your test gave me courage. I do not in the least fear death and for that very reason I feel very happy.

“Every word you have told me came true. How then can I refuse to believe what you told me about our dear Lord and my beloved wife? A medium seems to me a lighthouse by the sea of life, although before I met you I could have burned them at the stake. ‘Oh, God, forgive me for past sins.’ I am really wondering whether I shall go to England, although for myself I should like to go, but God attends to those things.

“Now please don’t forget to pray for me for you are a master-mind that helps and I shall never forget to pray for you no matter where I shall be. I must soon conclude this letter as my head is not yet clear

from the deadly suffering which it has undergone since I arrived, but I shall soon write more details of our life here.

"I will conclude this letter, wishing from my heart that you shall always be happy and secure while sojourning upon this earth. Good-by, till we meet again and don't forget that prayer.

"Very respectfully yours,

"A. Loomis."

When the Woman had finished the letter, which she had read to Ronile, she looked up at her daughter, expecting her to say something in regard to the letter.

Ronile's thoughts, however, seemed to dwell in the distance, then she said, "Oh, that is the man who came with a lot of soldiers and wanted you to prove to him that there was a God."

"Then he believes that there is one," said the mother, thoughtfully. "See, dear, you say to give up this work and go away. I may have to resort to sewing to earn our living, just to decorate a body, when we can decorate God's great altar with lost sons and daughters. This man is a writer and his books are being read by minds in the balance. His literature may just give them the last push that knocks them off the pedestal of faith into an abyss of unbelief and darkness. No, I will risk my freedom for this glorious work! What is a cell and bars to rescuing a soul like this that in ignorance tears apart the church carefully built in faith and worship! It is no more fair to God to criticise any of His houses than it is to kill the man who doesn't speak the same language. The Father has installed these stations of worship for a purpose and He wishes them to be respected. Always remember that and never look down on anybody for what they practice or how they worship. You can drive a learned person more quickly to degeneration than a savage, remember that. Too much artificial tinsel leads them to the broad staircase where they don't watch each step. A house that is being built must be started at the bottom; without foundation it cannot stand; it grows in height by having each stone or board carefully added and then

when the storms come it can hold out against them. I built you on a careful foundation; each day was a page on your record of time added in faith and wholesomeness.

"This is only a storm like many more about to come; it will hiss in a human hurricane about us. A pine tree seldom falls from wind and storm. Its needles are ever green. Let us then feel like the pine—that we must serve our mission even if cut down. We will then enhance the departed if not the living, who will decorate us for the birth of a Saviour in bringing home a lost soul. Each deed we do will be transformed into a crystal and decorate our tree of life. We have as many silent helpers as the pine tree has needles. Even if death by man should come, it will mean a new life to us, dear; a life so glorious for we will not have to return and live our life over if we do our best now in serving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit through man, by reminding them that power doesn't all come from the jingle of gold. The sound of church bells such as I heard in Europe drove me into the highest state of ecstasy, and such a sensation is wonderful!"

"I know," said Ronile, as she laid her hand on her mother's shoulder. "Just think how beautiful the chimes sound from the church down here on Amsterdam Avenue."

"People can't help but follow the sounds of words as they ring out and reach God and man—'Abide with me,' and so many others. We are not afraid, dear, for we are serving the greatest Master that ever was or ever will be. If a master has a servant who is ill at the plow, he will not care about the field or seed; he will nurse him to health; or if danger should threaten, the master will furnish arms to protect his servants. Our Master, dear, gives us arms of enlightenment, like a wand that brings the fairies to the afflicted and carries them out of a darkened, suppressed condition to a higher aspect, where they are entertained by seraphic whispers and angelic songs and rhythm."

"Yes, mother dear, I know and hope the angels will



"Dear Lord," cried Ronile, "we have hard times enough, and mother just wanted to please you. Why don't you send an earthquake and crush everything? I don't want to live in this miserable world any more."

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keep you out of prison. I pray every night that you will be spared, for once I dreamed that you were put in jail, but I did not want to tell you."

"It does not worry me, Ronile; if it lies in my destiny it cannot be avoided, and the Father will have a purpose that might free thousands of jailed souls through one confined body. All great prophets were cast into prison. Look at dear Joan of Arc. After she freed her people through the voice of God they jailed her as a witch and turned her over to the enemy. But her death at the stake made a transfiguration, a symbol of power in faith, which made her live in the minds of coming generations as a star that guides them. They needed that star and the fire of sacrifice is condensed to a star that rests on the brow of the victim and shines forth into the darkness of conditions. The more you suffer, the greater your light will be. The light on your brow counts more than all the wealth of kings and millionaires. It is your foresight; you can see right through them and that is why mediums are not tolerated by scribes; they see too much."

The bell rang and Ronile went to answer, then called her mother. It was the lady who lived next door.

"Say!" she said in a half-whisper, as the Woman approached the door, "I have a friend here from up-state and she is very much interested in spiritualism; can you give her a reading?"

"Let her come in," said the Woman.

"May Ronile come over a minute? My daughter just came from school and I want her to see Ronile. That child wants high-heeled shoes and powder on her face already."

"All right," said the Woman, with a glance at Ronile, which Ronile well understood, meaning that she was not to stay too long.

CHAPTER XXXV

AT THE THRESHOLD OF SELFISHNESS, OR TEMPTATION WHERE CAUTION GUARDS

Then they entered the test-room, and before they sat down the Woman said: "You want information, not enlightenment. I can only advise you, madam," and continuing she said, "The man you came with is a married man and there is a baby crying for her daddy." Then they sat down, a reproachful look coming over the face of the medium. "You don't have to do that for bread or diversion, for fortune has favored you abundantly. You have a kind and generous husband who keeps warm the fireside of your estate, and thinks you are here consulting a physician."

"You are right, there," said the stranger with a smile at the straight way the medium was reaching her.

"This is the first time in your life that you have attempted such a step, therefore, God gives you a warning in time. Remember that when a man leaves a wife and child for one who is old enough to be his mother, it will be only for a short time. Your youth and vitality are gone, your kidneys are in bad shape and your liver, too, and you know it. You are likely to have a stroke and suppose it should surprise you at a hotel where you were registered as another man's wife, and your faithful husband should read about it?"

Here the stranger covered her face with her jeweled hands and began to sob, "He would never forgive me."

"No, he would not, for he has been living truthfully in the thirty years of your married life, and would feel that you had deceived him all that time; his faith in womankind would fall like a mammoth tower, built in faith with stones of love and devotion, and crush him."

"I know it would kill him," said the disloyal wife.

"Another thing of vital importance is that your son is married and has two children. You never liked his wife, their mother, because she was a poor school teacher.

You had chosen a bride who had grooms and footmen and tendencies like your own."

"I know," came the answer, "she would never have made such a good wife, for she has already been divorced twice."

"Then you ought to sympathize and not blame your husband, if he longs to see his son's family. You call him common for wanting to be around that family, but you must see that it is wholesome and clean-cut refinement on both sides."

"Well, I was not inclined to have my son marry; he was hardly out of college, and it interfered with his career; a mother always wants the best for her children," said the lady.

"Judging from your standpoint, madam, you thought money was the best advancement he could have. You never thought of the moral drawbacks if he married just for money. Your son is a prominent lawyer and his wife and children are respected people; they live a perfect life of harmony and love. Such things no money can buy. How would your son feel if he knew about this case? His career would crumble and vanish into dust that would choke even his children and drive them away like hounded deer. They would eat your weakness on every bit of bread and their mother would take the picture (in front of which your son holds his babies and tells them what a saint dear grandmother is) and burn it in shame. Such are the consequences of one single sin, madam, remember that." Seeing the lady's heart stirred, the medium felt she had said enough and summoned the departed.

A minister came, her husband's father, telling her of his mission as a herder of souls; that he followed her and before harm was done he wanted the soul to conquer over the body and bury the weakness of sin. A little girl came and told her mother how long she had been in spirit and that her name was Myrtle.

"Oh, my baby," said the erring mother, "I don't want you to look into my wicked face. I am so ashamed!

I shall never be able to look anyone in the face again," she sobbed anew.

"No, mama dear," said the sweet voice, "you have not done any harm yet. We were just in time to check you from sin. See, mama, I would have to register all the tears of the little girl and weep with her because it was my mother who took her daddy. Mama, will you make me happy, really, truly happy?"

"Indeed I will," came the distressed, stammering answer.

"Go and buy some things for baby and Myrtle, your grandchildren. I am the baby's namesake and must look out for her happiness. Then buy a present for each of our family. That will help you get over the mistake and, mama, please go before the doctor comes back."

"Do you think it is better?"

"It is not only better, it is the thing to do, mama, the honest thing to do. Good-by. God help and bless you, mama dear." Thus the sweet voice vanished.

Another man's voice came next.

"I am Harold's father," he said. "I mortgaged my farm to help that boy study medicine. His mother found an early end in body because she helped in the wet fields and contracted pneumonia and died. We felt great pride in him and rejoiced when he married a dressmaker, who sewed to help him get a foothold. She did that for eight years, then God gave them a child and now that child needs a stem to climb upon and you took it, and left the plant to creep on the ground for others to step on."

"I don't want your son," said the lady with a shudder; "please may I go? I don't want to hear any more."

"I am sorry, madam," said the medium, with feeling.

"Oh, I am so glad I came to see you; I am going back home. God help me and forgive me," she said as she went out wringing her hands.

Soon Ronile came back and said the lady had just gone, and the neighbor wondered what was said to her.

"She should wonder about her own life," said the Woman. "Has her daughter been dismissed from school again?"

"Yes, mother; she smuggled rouge into the convent and the Sisters sent her home."

"Poor girl," said the Woman. "You see, dear, her mother takes the easiest way and the gentlemen that come there may have daughters of their own and feel a slight sting of conscience; therefore, the poor girl had to go, yet the environment went with her as the tuition is paid with tainted money and no good will come out of it. Ronile," said her mother looking straight into the eyes of her daughter, "you are almost as big as I am; you are old enough to know and take a lesson from the life of our neighbor and the consequences of her child. She is so young and beautiful and still the gates of wholesomeness are beginning to close on her. It is too bad."

"Why did the lady leave so soon, mother dear? She hardly said good-by," asked Ronile.

"She was just about to make a misstep," answered the mother, "and received a warning. If I had not been here the forces could not have reached her, and she would have disgraced her whole family and ruined her own life."

After awhile the neighbor wished to have a test held for herself, saying she had never had any use for it; that that lady from up-state was really not a friend; that she and her husband wanted to stay with her until he had a practice.

"Their lives don't bother us; we have all we can carry of our own sins," said the medium.

"I know," the neighbor said. "Flossy is home again, and I don't know where to put her," she kept on wearily; "she is good for nothing."

"What lesson does she get from her mother?" asked the Woman sincerely. "Her place is with you, and God has other work for you, handy as you are. It is easy to take the easiest way, but hard to keep on the road the toilers tread and enjoy their privileges in life. If the good Creator did not want you to have the child, she would have been placed in some other home, but if you take this road you must also take the consequences."

"What else can I do?" asked the neighbor; "I want to give Flossy a good education, and that costs money."

"Is Ronile lacking in education?"

"No," answered the neighbor, "I wish Flossy was as well educated. I always tell her to take an example from Ronile. How ladylike she is and everybody treats her like a queen."

"Do you know why?" asked the Woman. "She respects herself; that is the greatest and most important of all traits, 'Self-respect.' A piece of dry bread and tea will taste better than an eight-course dinner that robs you of your self-respect. Life is all a hollow bubble, a beautifully decorated shell. A small bit of lead can penetrate that shell and break it, causing life to ooze out in one second; then a few days later that body is fit for the worms, and must be buried deep down. Think of that! No matter how highly educated or wealthy that body was, there was no escape from death, but the soul that left the body reaps the seeds of glory in the field of good deeds, or enters the chasm of despair to pay for the penalty of sins."

"God doesn't condemn all prostitutes," said the neighbor. "Did not Christ say, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at her?'"

"But that courtesan had already had enough punishment in being dragged through the streets by sinners, perhaps worse than she was."

"Look at Mary Magdalene," said the other; "Christ made her a saint."

"When she gave up her sinful life," said the medium, "and washed the Saviour's feet with tears of remorse, then dried them with her beautiful hair that was her sole pride, just to show how humble she was."

"A friend of mine has joined the Science Church; I guess I will do that, too," said the neighbor.

"Will you give up your mode of living when you join that church?"

"I don't know," said the other, with a worried look; "how can I make a living?"

"What did you do before you sold yourself?"

"I was a waitress."

"Can't you go back to that work, or make lingerie? I can help you sell it. Then you can rent out some of your rooms to pay the rent and keep your daughter with you. She makes beautiful things the Sisters taught her. God will help you if you only try; I know He always helps us."

"Yes, but look at the hunted life you live. I'd sooner be dead than to feel with every ring of the door-bell it might be a warrant for arrest," said the neighbor.

"I don't feel that way," said the Woman calmly; "my conscience is clear, because I serve a Power greater than all the judges on earth, and He has a reason if ever the time comes."

"One day last week," said the neighbor, "there were two gentlemen in my apartment all day, who were sent here to watch you."

"Why, they could have come in because my door is always open, you know that," said the medium.

After the test, Ronile announced a gentleman.

"Oh, this is the doctor," said the neighbor, and turning to him she said, "Your wife left here to go home."

"So Flossy tells me," said the gentleman. "Did she leave any message for me?"

"No, but come over to my rooms; I want to talk to you," and they left. After awhile the neighbor asked if the doctor could see Mrs. Delien.

"Come right in," said the Woman, "as I will be busy after two o'clock."

"Are you a medium?" he asked.

"I am," came the reply.

"Did you give my wife a test?"

"No, I did not."

"But she was here to see you and left suddenly," he said losing his temper for a minute.

"Your wife, sir, is too far away, she could not see me, but there was a lady who asked to see me who was a married woman and who went home to her husband."

He thought a moment, perplexed and said: "That's curious. Did she say anything at all about us?"

"No, she had no chance."

"But how do you come to know we are not man and wife?"

"Her husband's father, a minister, and her departed child, Myrtle, told me."

He looked at the Woman amazed, saying, "That's right, she had a daughter by that name," and sitting down, he said, "Do you see anything for me?"

"I see a woman standing by a window, facing the east," here the medium stroked her brow and kept on. "She weeps as she draws the curtain to shut out the light, then goes to the crib of a child that is to take a nap and weeps. The child puts her arms around the mother's neck and says, 'Don't cry, mother dear, daddy surely will come home for dinner.'"

"How does the child look?" he asked sharply.

"Blonde curls and brown eyes, your eyes and her mother's hair."

"What is the child's name?"

"Millie Elizabeth."

"By Jove," came the remark.

"Millie is after your wife's mother and Elizabeth after your own. They are both departed and here." The Woman gave full particulars of his mother's apparel; then told him the cause of her death, and his father's and how he had to mortgage the farm to pay for his education and that his mother had worked in the field and contracted pneumonia and died. The gentleman could no longer control his feelings. He laid his head on the table and wept like a child. His mother used the Woman's hand and stroked his hair and spoke to him. After awhile he composed himself. The Woman came to; his eyes watched her face as it changed back to a calm, normal expression.

"Madam," he said, "I just spoke with my mother, just as when she lived. Oh, it was so wonderful! And she told me all I did today, every step I made; she told me there is no use of my trying here; my practice is good at home and my baby wants her daddy. Oh, God," he continued, pushing his hands through his massive head of hair, "I am so glad this has happened. Oh, my mother

is with me and forgives me, my good little mother, who gave up her life for the welfare of her boy, and I wanted to give up my poor baby for just a blind fancy."

"Yes," said the medium, "you as a physician ought to know that the lady is not well and has blood clots which may develop into apoplexy. It is not worth the chance, believe me."

"I tell you," he kept on, "this lady," and he shuddered at the thought of her now, "is immensely wealthy. She was a patient of mine and always said that, since I had a good practice and wealthy ladies as patients, my wife was not educated enough to compete with my present social position."

"But," interrupted the medium, "she was practical enough to help you get there. It may take her longer to feel comfortable in the social chair, but it will not take her long because she is natural and wholesome."

"You said it," came the happy reply. "I told her I would go away and leave her and she stood it like a man," he said proudly.

"Like a woman," corrected the medium.

"Say," he said, "I only wish I could follow this up; why it is the greatest science. My! I will never forget how your face became my mother's; how your voice changed, just like hers. Could you come up-state soon? I want my wife to see you."

"I have not the time," said the Woman, "but bring your wife in and let me know ahead of time."

"Thank you, madam, you saved my life." Walking out he noticed the diploma from the World's Fair, also the huge flower basket that had been shipped and placed in the test-room.

"Did you make those?"

"Yes."

"You are an artist, madam. Is this the diploma of your work?"

"Yes."

"Could I buy a flower for my wife?"

"I will give you one in memory of the good work

the spirit friends did this day," and she handed him a pink rose.

"God bless you, madam, and if you ever need a friend, you have my address."

"Thank you, doctor," replied the medium, and thus another curtain closed on a drama which through the help of unseen helpers had turned homeward, from the fires of temptation, a wiser and better man.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WITH CHARITY AS HOSTESS

Two weeks later a large touring car stopped in front of Mrs. Delien's home. A lady and gentleman begged to be announced.

"She is in," said the lady relieved. She told the chauffeur to bring the boxes, packed with delicious fruit, up to the Woman.

"We came to town, my husband and I, and thought we would stop in and see you, and we brought a little fruit for you."

"That is so sweet and thoughtful of you; I don't know how to thank you," said the Woman.

"Tut, tut," said the gentleman, smiling, "my wife thinks you are a wonder. Did you know you helped her? Why, she has not been to the doctor in two weeks, and she was so attentive to me, I lived in the seventh heaven. Before she was always so cranky; never knew how to approach her. First of all," he kept on, "we want to know if you could have lunch with us?"

"Thank you, but I have a daughter at school and would not like to have her come home and find me gone."

"You work so hard," said the lady, "I know you don't cook big dinners."

"You are right," said the medium, "I could not work if I did. If the stomach works the brain can't."

"Well, we will call for your daughter and go and have lunch," kept on the gentleman.

"Could she be back by one o'clock? I must be back at two myself."

"It can all be arranged," he said, eager not to be put off as he was determined to have her as their guest for lunch.

They went to the school and waited, then picked up Ronile as she came out, and rushed to the already ordered lunch.

"I wish I could have you all day," he said as they waited for the soup.

"So many wish for that; I often wish I could divide myself and work on both sides."

The gentleman looked at Ronile and drank in her beauty. She wore a navy blue corduroy dress, trimmed with Irish crochet collar and cuffs, and a row of white mother-of-pearl buttons. Her hair was parted in the middle and hung in a mass of curls around her flushed, excited face.

"You are a mighty pretty little girl," he said; "you will never be able to paint your cheeks as nice as they are now. Try to keep them, by keeping as good as you are now."

"You are right," said the Woman, "a person's soul reflects on the countenance."

"Ronile," said the host, "we ought to make a day of it. You won't lose by being absent a half day."

"Oh, no," came the answer, "I've never missed a minute so far, or even been late. Thank you very much, but I have had a lovely time and must go."

"That's the spirit I admire," said the host, as she left. "She will make a good citizen some day—duty first. If parents would only impress duty more earnestly upon their children, and love for their teachers. The majority think their children too good for anything and they are lacking in discipline, which renders them very unhappy when the trials of life demand submission."

He looked at his wife happily, and said, "Now, love, how would you like to have this lady and her daughter spend a week-end with us?"

"I thought of that," said the wife, trying to fan away the hot flush that crept over her face; "could you come if we called for you Friday or Saturday?"

"It is your fault that we can't," said the Woman in a happy tone, "I shall have to preserve the lovely pears you brought, and make some jam out of the plums and quinces. You should see the happy smiles when I make the round and distribute them."

"Our fruit is rotting on the ground," said the gentleman, "and we come to town almost every week. It

would be easy for us to bring some each time and give them to some poor people."

"But the trouble is when once you start with them you never get through," said the lady a little wearily.

"I don't think so, madam," said the Woman, "and you would not even need to see them. They would gladly come and get it, if you would leave it with me. I know one lady who is nearly blind; her daughter supports her and sometimes when there is no work there is no food, for she just about makes enough to make ends meet."

"How pitiful," said the rich lady.

"Yes," continued the Woman, "I would like to see her today before my work starts. If you don't mind we could pass there."

"The car has not come back yet, for I have not heard the signal. It must be very gratifying to you, madam," kept on the gentleman, "to be able to render help to such unfortunate people; really one-half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives."

"Yes," said the Woman, "I only intercede. If it were not for the kindness of you people higher up I could not afford much, but this work meets both ends and ties them together in the center. Then charity and gratitude cooperate and make that live wire of harmony, keeping the shuttle of good deeds in steady motion and weaving a robe that can grace every altar of God."

"That's well spoken," said the gentleman.

"You see," said the wife, "I did not exaggerate any in telling you what a mind rests in that little head."

"There goes the 'toot' of the car," said the host, as he rose to go; and turning to the Woman he said, "Have you time to go?"

"Oh, yes, I must go and cheer her, she waits for me; but now I have no cake baked; I was selfish with my morning."

"Oh, we will attend to that," and after reaching the sidewalk they turned into a confectionery store and soon came back with a large box of French pastries.

"How good you are!" said the Woman.

"Not half so good as you are. Why I have not felt

so wholesome and happy as I have this hour I have spent with you."

"But you are a wonderfully mellow soil; a good spiritual seed thrives fast in your being and I can see you needed the real opportunity to manifest your sense of charity."

"Oh, my wife," he said, "has done a lot; she is the head of all the charitable movements in our hometown." Here the wife stole a glance toward the Woman, a meaning look in her eyes as if she wanted to say, "You don't believe him, you know better," but the Woman's eyes met hers with a deep, sincere look, which in the language of the soul said, "The past is forgotten; you are living in the present with an effort of doing better tomorrow."

When they had seated themselves in the luxurious touring car, the lady took the Woman's hand and pressed it affectionately; the pressure of sincerity was returned and just a few words were whispered: "You are the best friend I ever had. You advise and help me from an unselfish motive." Another pressure of the hand was the only answer the Woman gave her. They rode through the great shopping district into a side street where masses of children were assembled to get the benefit of the late autumn sun's rays. There was the bare cement sidewalk which they had to content themselves with, there being no place for them to play. When the Woman stepped out of the car the lady held up a huge bunch of flowers, which the good host had also purchased for the stricken old Jewish lady, which he said she could smell if she could not see them.

The Woman could hardly mount the stairs, for the little tots clung to her skirts, calling, "Oh, Lady, please gimme a flower." Their appeals were answered, as she hastily pulled a flower for each. By the window on the ground floor sat the old lady, her excited actions proving to the spectators in the comfortable car that she must be the one they had come to see. A minute later they saw two old hands reach out and two young arms embrace the worn-out form of the old lady who had to feel her way

around, for a veil had formed over her eyes which, as the tears formed, grew heavier and shut out the glorious sunshine from a poor and lonely body. They saw how she hugged the flowers and tried to feel a rose. The gentleman saw how the Woman told her of the friends in the car and how the poor old lady tried to straighten her hair down on the sides of her temples.

"Laura, this is a sad sight," he said, "I'll go in and talk to her," which he did, but the old lady was too excited to talk. He only heard her say, "If God lets my daughter keep her work, then we can stay here."

A bill was slipped into her hand by the stranger and the quivering lips and the tears that ran down the wrinkled old cheeks paid the giver a wonderful interest on the price so generously invested.

"It is only a loan after all," said the Woman, as they sat in the car once more, "and now you know that a glass of jelly or a cake will be very welcome in a place of this kind."

"How those children begged for just a flower!" said the wife as she wrapped her sable fur more tightly about her. "It really doesn't take much to satisfy them."

"No, it doesn't," said the Woman, wistfully; "they therefore have a better chance to reach the higher realms than those who are bound with strings of selfishness to many earthly treasures."

After the Woman left these good people, the gentleman said, "No wonder you felt better after going to see her, she takes the sting right out of you. Perhaps we can bring them up to our home next week. She could make her jelly there and rest at the same time."

Ronile said she would like to visit them, but told her mother that if they could afford a vacation she would rather go to Kenwood.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE HEALING VIRTUE

"You are just in time," said Mrs. Hilbert, as Mrs. Delien and Ronile came in unexpectedly one evening. "Ruth's husband is laid up with ulcers of the stomach, and has not worked for a month."

"We will have to sit in silent devotion," said the Woman.

When Ruth heard that Mrs. Delien and Ronile had arrived, she ran in leaps across the street, forgetting the dignified attitude a married woman should exhibit.

"So," she said after kissing them, "my poor husband could die and you would never look after him; shame on you!"

"That is too bad, Ruth, but if it was serious I would have been drawn more," said the Woman.

"It is serious enough," Ruth said, "he can't eat a thing without it foaming through his mouth."

They went over to the cottage where Ruth built her nest and found the young man doubled up with pain.

"Look," said Ruth, almost in tears, "he has been like that for days and the doctor says he must go to Texas or Colorado; that he is tubercular."

"Where there is life there is hope," said the Woman, as she rolled up her sleeves and began to work circles around the solar plexus; gently stroking outward movements. Then she took a linen towel and dipped it in warm water, adding a dash of vinegar, and laid it over the patient's stomach, then covered him, first in a cotton, then a woolen blanket; then she sent Ruth to her mother for a cup of camomile tea.

"You see," said Mrs. Hilbert, "Ruth always kicked and wanted to pull out my camomile bush, but now it may come in handy and cure him."

"It will if he has faith in it."

"Oh, I would drink gall, if I thought it would help me," said the patient.

"This is not so bitter as gall but will ease the pain," said the Woman, as she held the cup of fairly hot tea to his mouth, which he drank slowly, then he lay back and waited to sense the effect.

"No foam now," said he with a smile; "it just creeps through me. I hope it keeps up the good work."

"It will if you keep your mind on it," said the Woman. Then she went for a glass of water and placed it at the left side of the bed, covering it with a handkerchief, saying, "Take three swallows of this water every time you wake up, and mention the name of the Holy Trinity."

"I will," said the patient; "I am already much relieved and feel like getting up."

"You can do that tomorrow, but now give concentration to the spirit doctors, who are helping you," said the medium. Then she suggested that all sit around the bed. Later Mr. Hilbert joined them and after awhile he complained of a weakness in the stomach.

"I feel the same way," said his wife, and Ruth complained of the feeling.

"This is a good sign. He receives help and we are taking the unnatural condition away from him," said the medium in a weak voice. Soon the patient began to breathe more regularly and indicated a sound sleep. "Now, we can leave him," she said rising.

"You look as pale as death," said Mrs. Hilbert to the Woman, "we must eat something."

"It would not harm any of us," said the boss.

"If my poor Jack could only eat, too," said Ruth, in a sad voice.

"Why not?" asked the Woman; "by tomorrow he will be quite himself, but I would not advise him to go to work at the ammunition factory for awhile for it is there that the poisons entered into the cells of the stomach."

"That is right," said the boss. "Why, before that the boy could eat rusty nails and they would not hurt him."

"His stomach is weak and easily upset. Out-of-door

work is what he needs in the future, and he can help the country just the same."

"I say so," chimed in the boss.

The next day Jack was eating his Sunday dinner with the rest of the folks, although he was quite pale and thin, but in spirit he was quite his old self again.

"Some change," said the folks, "he could not sit and eat with us."

"You could have done that long ago," said Ruth, pointing to the Woman. "Here I was on the verge of being a widow."

"No, mother is more becoming to you," said the Woman with much meaning in her tone.

Here Ruth looked over to her mother, saying, "Now, ma, I don't like that; what do you want to do that for?"

"I did nothing," said the mother, sincerely. Ruth looked around the party trying to read each face to see if they knew something.

"There, you silly goose," said Mrs. Hilbert, "were you not told that by next Easter three would sit around your table?"

"I know," said Ruth, and continuing she addressed her husband: "Well, honey, as long as you are sitting by the table it will be all right; I won't worry any more. God bless and keep you well, dear," she said, with tears of thankfulness in her eyes.

"How is Minnie?" asked the Woman, trying to change the subject.

"Married to Ed, the neighbor's boy," said Ruth; "now they can join their farms. The farmers like to see their children build their nests into the neighbors' houses, so their property stretches into space."

"This surely was not a hasty marriage, for they were sweethearts in childhood," said Mrs. Hilbert.

"That is nice, I always liked that quiet girl; she will make a good wife, and their property has doubled in value since the war," joined in the boss.

"You bet; they have a brand-new automobile. You would hardly know Minnie," chimed in Ruth, "and she deserves it."

"How is the mother?"

"Oh, fine, she is up and around and never complains any more. She read the books you sent her that time and since then has talked of nothing else."

"Pa," said Mrs. Hilbert, "you'd better drive them around this afternoon."

"Yes, that is a good idea."

"But we will want a basket," said Mrs. Delien, "for there must be some mushrooms in their pasture. It may be too cold but it will be fun looking around."

Soon the automobile was filled with the jolly crowd and they were ready for a ride along the country road. The leaves of the trees were turning their color to a mixture well tinted by Nature's art. The air was still warm, yet it concealed a crispness and odor of the autumn that had taken the reigning seat until Jack Frost threw his icy mantle over all. The farm had the appearance of being clothed in Sunday garments with its new coat of paint, and some asters still held their heads high as if to show their victory in braving the frost which had already nipped most of the beautiful assortment of flowers planted around the house.

"This looks quite different from when I last saw it," said the Woman, always happy to see things progress.

Minnie's mother came to greet them. Her step was always somewhat heavy, but she bustled about laying cushions on the commodious rockers for her distinguished guests to sit on. They told her not to bother.

"Why," she said, "I don't have the mayor of the town visit me every day, and my dear, good Mrs. Delien, who just pulled me out of the greatest misery in life—that is, brooding over things that don't have to be, and then blaming God for it. Will He ever forgive me?" Here she looked at the Woman with the thought that perhaps she could also lift the burden from her heart, a question which sprang up like a demon each day of her life. "I try so hard now to make up for the lost time."

"God forgives everything if we only show a sincere effort to be forgiven by trying to do good," said Mrs. Delien.

"How is your husband, Ruth?" inquired the farmer's wife.

Here the one addressed came over and kissed the Woman, saying happily, "This one fixed it again; he had dinner with us today, and would have come along but she would not let him overdo as he is quite weak."

"She did!" said the old lady with a loving look at the Woman. "I know if Mrs. Delien ever takes a thing in hand she finishes it."

"With the help of God," came the answer. "But you don't seem to lack effort in finishing things either," kept on the Woman, smiling; "look at this basketful of knitting."

"I try to keep busy," said the farmer's wife, "we have a number of relatives on the battlefield and then I think there are a lot of boys who have no mother living; they need sweaters, too. I wish it were over though. Not that I want to quit knitting, but on account of the lives that are being lost and the boys who are maimed and crippled when they come back. It is very sad."

"Yes," said Mrs. Hilbert pensively. "Last week four girls were burned to death over here in the factory; burned to a crisp."

"For what? Tell me," said the old lady. "Oh, what an awful world!"

"For this is the way of the world," said the Woman, as she rose to go. "We must get back to the city today," she said. Coming out they saw Minnie, Ed and Austin coming over with a basketful of mushrooms. "Oh, you did get some," said Mrs. Delien. "I am so glad; we love them toasted even for breakfast. It makes me so happy," she said as she looked at the young couple. "Why you look so pretty, Minnie."

"Sure," said her husband, "married life agrees with her."

"And she is so happy that it makes her beautiful," added the Woman.

"What class are you in?" asked Mrs. Hilbert of the young farmer.

"Fifth," he answered.

"What is the trouble?"

"Oh, my left ear-drum is busted."

"That's too bad," said the mayor; "how did that happen?"

"When I was small, the old man cracked me over the ear and it busted the drum. Since then I have had trouble and can only hear on one side," said the young man.

As they were driving home, the sun was turning to a reddish tint as it glided toward the western horizon. Mrs. Hilbert said: "I never believed in people hitting their children. If they have to go as far as to burst a child's ear-drum in order to make it behave, why, they might as well take a hammer and beat it over the head. There is a boy who has the frame of a perfect man and can hear only in one ear because his father could not control his temper."

"We can punish our children in a different way and without maiming them," said the Woman.

"I know," said Ruth, laughing, "one day when Ronile was a little tot some school children stuck their tongues out at her, and she did the same; remember? We were sitting on the porch and you showed me what colors to use in my embroidery and when Ronile stuck out her tongue at the children, you did not say a word, but went in and got half a lemon and stood behind her unconcerned; the next time she did it, you rubbed the lemon on her tongue, and I never saw her do it again."

"That was better than slapping her," said the Woman, glad that it had left such a good lesson in Ruth's memory.

"Babies are too tender, their bones are soft and one jerk of an arm may cause a child to become humpbacked in later years. A baby is a most careful student; they like to have things explained, and a mother can talk all the little weaknesses out of it, if she only has the patience and time," said Ruth.

"A woman can arrange to talk to her baby even while she performs her household duties, just as well as talking to the neighbors," said the Woman.

"You've said it," joined in Mrs. Hilbert. "God

gives the rabbits and the grass; a woman will not get more than she can handle. Years ago the mothers had large families and they had more time to sit in their rocking chairs and rest than they have today. But, of course, they did not have so many card clubs and such as that, but they had good times just the same. I remember that I had many a sleigh ride hanging around my mother's neck as she held sister on her lap and we went flying down the hill like we lived in fairyland."

"I love fairy stories," said Austin, although he was a big boy now and helped his father in the factory.

"I, too," chimed in Ronile, "they make you feel happy."

"There is something to it," said the Woman. "I see wonderful fairies all the time; they are your brothers and sisters who depart out of the body, then return with a wand of power in their hands and work out our difficulties."

"You surely must have a band of them," said Mrs. Hilbert, "for you work out the difficulties of everybody you come across."

"I could do nothing if they did not help me, for the people must open the door of faith from the inner-self and set the table of cordiality to entertain the silent helpers in love."

"Here we are," said the boss, as he drove past the house toward the garage.

"My nose is cold," said Ruth as she rubbed her face against that of her husband, who was lying on the couch, kissing him at the same time.

"Oh, mushrooms!" he said as he saw the Woman by the door with the basket in her hand, and enjoying Ruth's greeting to her recovering husband.

"And I can't eat any," he said wearily.

"Why not?" asked the Woman from the doorway.

"Did the tomatoes that you ate for dinner hurt you?"

"No."

"Well, then, toasted mushrooms won't hurt you either," she said, taking an apron from a hook in the kitchen and getting ready to help with the supper.

"God bless you," said the patient, as he sat at the table eating his toast and the fresh mushrooms. "It is heaven to be able to eat and relish the food and not be in fear of the pains afterwards."

"You must thank God, not me. He blessed you for believing in Him. He is perfect and if we cling to Him as much as we cling to a habit, we can't help but feel healthy, happy and successful."

"When will you come out again?" asked Mrs. Hilbert as she kissed them good-by.

"When an opportunity presents itself."

"Thanksgiving and no later," said the boss; "now remember."

"We will try our best. God be with you till we meet again," she said waving her hand and off they went, filled not alone with mushrooms, but with blessings and gratitude. They did spend Thanksgiving with the Hilberts and found Ruth's husband looking strong and healthy, but he was doing outdoor work and drank his camomile tea regularly.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE THREE QUESTIONS; WITH THE HUNGRY OLD WOMAN

Their visits were always happy without going into details, but the housework became trying when they returned home. An auto was standing in front of the house and a man stood across the street constantly watching the windows where lonely hearts sought refuge and comfort. They did not watch the paint marks on the faces of those who with a wink of the eye sought bread for their lives instead of prayer.

Among the many letters received by the Woman was one from a detective, asking if she could answer three questions. A light rested on the letter. "He is acquainted with the spirit work," thought the Woman, and answered it. The gentleman was indeed a seeker for truth, having heard about a case where a woman lost a diamond ring and offered one hundred dollars reward for its return. He was on the case and had no results. The lady heard of the medium and on consulting with her was told that a small boy had her ring and that he lived down the hill, giving full details of the surroundings, and the owner of the ring found it just where the medium had told her. This aroused the detective's interest and thus he came to see the Woman. His questions were answered and he offered the medium five dollars.

On being told that there was no charge he said: "That's all right, give it to the Red Cross if you don't want it." After the last person had gone, the Woman went to her room, it being past midnight, and was anxious to retire. Switching on the light, she saw the small form of a woman jump up in fright.

"Don't be frightened," said the Woman, "but tell me, how did you get into my room?"

"Oh, I did not want the people out there to see me," said the little lady, whose refined features showed lines of deep sorrow. Her hands were small and she held onto the chair to steady herself. "Oh, please pardon me,

madam, for coming into your private room, but your daughter said I might sit here and be more comfortable, and I begged her to turn out the light so you would not have extra expense," said the little lady.

"What brings you here?" asked the Woman.

"Oh, I could sit here all night," came the answer; "need brought me here. I have no coal to make my room warm."

The Woman still held in her hand the five dollars given her by the detective, and this she slipped into the hand of the little lady, saying, "Do you want to stay here tonight?"

"Oh, no, my husband is sick and I must be going. I thought you would never get through, and fell asleep. Do you work every day this late?"

"Yes, and sometimes later," answered the Woman, as she took the little lady by the shoulder and led her into the kitchen. "Would you like a cup of tea or chocolate?" she asked.

"Anything you like," came the answer, "but tea I have all the time."

"Well, then, we will make some chocolate," said the Woman, as she started to make some toast, at the same time filling a basket with food. After they had eaten the toast and drunk the warm, nourishing chocolate, the Woman put on her coat and went out with the little lady to help her carry the things. "You did not exaggerate," she said, as they entered the small, cold apartment, and heard someone cough. Walking back home she wondered if those detectives were still on her trail, looking for some reason to rob her of her liberty.

One evening before dusk she hurried down to the lake in the park to take some bread crumbs to the birds there. Four sailors were sitting near the lake, eagerly discussing the difference between the East and West.

"I wonder," said one young looking boy, "if they would treat these easterners the same way out home. Why it makes me sick."

The Woman spoke to them. "You are disappointed

here. I suppose you have not enough means to have a good time on land."

"No, we tried to have a good time, and spent it all," they said. "Things are too high in this skyscraper town."

"Have you had dinner?" she asked, to which they answered, "No."

"Well, then, come and have dinner with me."

They jumped up in glee. "Gee! You must be a westerner."

"No," replied the hostess, "I have been in the West and met lots of good people, but I must let you entertain yourselves, as I have some marketing to do. What would you like to eat?"

"Steak," came the jolly answer.

"I'll peel the potatoes," said one, and soon they were sitting around the table enjoying some good juicy steak and French fried potatoes, string beans, lettuce and nice warm mince pie.

"This," said the Woman, "is a treat," as she cut each a large piece of the pie, "it was sent to me by dear friends. We must hurry as I begin work at seven o'clock until midnight and later sometimes." They asked her if she was a teacher.

"Somewhat," she answered, "but you know I am just a sister among the brothers, that is all." As they were drinking their coffee, she gave each a test.

"We thought you must be something like that," they said, "and we know all about this work. We go when we can, but here you have no signs and we thought there were none."

"Lots of beer signs," said one of them.

The Woman led them to the window and showed them the auto and the men who watched. "That's the only sign we have," she said.

They looked at each other, these boys in the uniform that meant a fight for Freedom, and said just one word—"Hell."

CHAPTER XXXIX

CASTING SHADOWS WITH A CROSS

Christmas passed and still the men watched at the park wall and the auto was waiting if the cold weather permitted. The Woman's work grew into the early hours of the morning when she received the truth-seekers. It was on a Monday evening. The Woman had done her own washing in the morning for she felt the money was needed as so many people had no coal or food and she saved in every way. At her dinner hour she went on the roof to get her clothes, when two women stood at the door and begged to see her. She told them that she had no time as she would have to eat her dinner and rest a little for the evening work.

"We have been here so often," said one, "and need help so badly; please can't you see us? We don't want to harm you," and she pulled out a rosary and said, "I swear by this." They were partly concealed from view by a curtain, yet the sight of the rosary played an appealing part on the mind of the medium. She thought they surely would not use an emblem of God's worship to take her freedom.

"This is my meal-time," said the Woman, "if you go together I will see you; otherwise I will not have time to eat."

"I don't care," said the stout one with blond hair, "if you only give my friend a test; I will come another time." So the Woman let her dinner go and went into the test-room where she sat for a long time and could not get an occult connection.

Then she took the Bible and patiently read aloud, "And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coast came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said to them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' and they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,' and he said unto them, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' and they said, 'Unto John's

baptism.' Then Paul said: 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people they should believe in Him which should come after him, that is, Jesus Christ. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.' And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came unto them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied, and all the men were about twelve, and he went into the synagogue and spake holy for the space of three months, discussing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God." But here she read in silence for a few minutes, then aloud: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul! So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirit went out of them." Here the medium looked at the thin, tall woman sitting in front of her, an animal skin around her neck.

She thought of the Indian's warning and said, "Madam, I cannot get a message for you."

"But you must," said the other, somewhat impressed, "perhaps if you read it will help me." Here she mentioned a medium that the Woman knew and said: "Madam So-and-So had a hard time also but did finally get me a good message. I am so worried about someone, if you could only tell me."

"Yes," said the medium, "if it was only that someone that guides through the grace of God's refuge, but the gates of heaven seem closed to you." She turned the leaves of the Bible mechanically as she spoke and rested on the Twelfth Chapter of Corinthians. The spiritual gift; their profit; the actual spiritual body. She read aloud again: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away into these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore, I give ye to understand that no man speaking by spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit and there are differences of administration but the same Lord. And there are diversities of opera-

tions but it is the same God which maketh in all. But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For the one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, by the same spirit; to another faith by the same spirit; to another gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. But all these work that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, for as the body is one, and has many members and all the members of that one body being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink with one spirit.

“For the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say because I am not of the hand I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say because I am not of the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were the hearing, where were the smelling? But now had God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath passed him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to the part which lacked, and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular and God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly, prophets, thirdly, teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

The medium looked up at the stranger, "You understand what I read?"

"Yes," said the other quite absorbed.

"And you understand its meaning? For I did not look for this scripture, it was laid open to you. Remember then that there is a reason from a higher power. It is an unseen might and it strikes unexpectedly the wicked who are seeking their bread in demoralizing God's station of prophet transmission."

While the stranger was thus absorbed in the medium's speech, and had forgotten her mission, the gates were opened and her loved ones found admission to render spiritual help to a child far beyond a spirit reach, that dealt daily in changing a rosary to shackles and prison bars. The medium had forgotten the danger signal and summoned the loved ones of the detective, thinking perhaps they might help her find a way to know the great danger of disregarding the Omnipotent power in using a symbolic emblem to trick earthly existence.

She laid her hand on the detective's hand and said, "You suffer with rheumatism."

"I do," came the answer. "Can you help me?"

"God will help you if you abide by His laws." There she told her the name of her superior officer and said: "I am not afraid of her who sent you, tell her if you wish, and also mention that if life ended with this body I might resort to an easier mode of living as she does, but life's consequences of sin do not end in communion each month and the burning of candles. One sigh from a prison cell can blow out the light of a million candles. It makes a mist between heaven and earth and through that mist the guilty one must travel; that may take eons of time. A soul of that kind will be shrouded in a prison and will hear the gnashing of teeth and wailing cries. Such a hell is one of the worst kind, for every second is filled with reproaches and blasphemy." Here the detective

with the animal skin around her neck shivered in a horrified fashion. "Then," continued the medium, "there is a brother of yours in the war."

"Oh, yes, what of him?" Here the medium mentioned the regiment and division. "That's right," said the detective lady. "Oh, tell me, will my brother return?" The medium looked questioningly at the spirit faces, their heads nodding, then one of the souls impressed on the medium to tell her that he would return.

"This is predicting," said the medium, "I don't have to answer that."

"Oh, do tell me, if you can," cried the other, "for I am so worried."

"Your Aunt Bridget says he will."

"Oh, thank you," said the other. "This was the best test I ever had."

"Make good use of it," said the medium, rising.

"What are the charges?"

"Nothing," answered the medium, "I never make any," and here she pointed to the basket of silk flowers. "This is my material work, but people take my time so much that I can't make any."

"That is wonderful work," said the other as she left. "You are a good medium and I thank you."

After they had gone the Woman looked out of the window and the auto, too, was gone, and for two weeks the man was missing from the park wall.

"Oh," thought the medium, "my test helped; the dear Lord found a way to relieve me of the suspense in seeing bars before me each day."

Thus Lent arrived and Ash Wednesday. The medium held the general seance. "There is a danger signal for my freedom, I see myself in prison. Well, it is Lent," she said wearily, "and perhaps the Lord wishes it so."

The next day she was unable to give tests. People came from out of town and had to go back.

"I don't feel well enough to see any one," she told the operator.

In the evening a colored maid came to summon the medium to her mistress, saying, "It is most important."

"Sara, I cannot, I am in Gethsemane; someone will

take my freedom I know, for it seems so close. It is Lent and I must do it for mankind, otherwise God would spare me," said the medium.

"Oh, you may imagine that," said Sara.

"No, no, I am sure, and perhaps by tomorrow evening you will know; call me up tomorrow evening, I may be able to see your mistress after that," said the medium.



Ronile rehearsing her part of "Light," in *The Bluebird*. "Yes," said Daddy Handel, "Mrs. Delien, keep her on this road, with careful guiding. She'll make 'The Way of the World' lots brighter."—*Page 199.*

CHAPTER XL

THE ARREST

Next morning they got up early and Ronile had just left for school when the bell rang. It was the detective lady and a gentleman. Seeing the Woman she quickly went into the apartment and told the man to follow, then said, "You are under arrest."

"Very well," came the answer. Then the Woman went into her room to dress, but the detective followed her closely. "Is the case so criminal that I can't dress alone?" she asked.

"I must stay with you and watch so that you cannot harm yourself."

"Harm myself?" asked the medium, a sad smile creeping over her face; "for what? Because you are about to put an iron hand around the freedom of your soul, not my body? This is my stepping-stone, a golden key to the gate of redemption."

The little canary bird chirped alarmingly. "Oh, there is a sound; someone knows of my plight, even a little bird." She talked with it and the bird seemed to answer in his way. "I will be back soon," she said as she left the house, glad that at least Ronile was spared the sight of her trip to the station house. Before going she asked if she might call up someone, but they said, "No." However, she managed to tell the operator to call Riverside A2695.

"Tell them I am under arrest and to come and help me."

"You are not allowed to do that," said the woman detective, "as it is against the law when one is under arrest."

"Against the law of man, perhaps," came the answer; "that can be overthrown tomorrow, but woe unto the one who violates the eternal law of God! I am sorry for you," said the medium.

"How did you get her? She was the hardest case in the city," said the man.

"Oh," said the woman triumphantly, "I got her in predicting that my brother would come back from France."

"Did she tell you anything good?"

"Sure; everything."

"And made no charge?"

"No, I got her on predicting."

They had the medium between them. The man looked at her and said, "When you get out, I'll come to see you."

"It will not be necessary," replied the medium, "my work is done here."

"Do you believe in this?" asked the woman detective.

"Sure I do! What do you think we do when we sit at the station house? Why, we have table rapping and the Ouija Board, and everything."

"Still you take the liberty of a medium," said the arrested prophet.

"That's the law," came the answer. The medium was too disgusted to argue any further. She submitted quietly and said no more.

First, they took her to the station house and recorded the case; then to the court-house. A large man with a coarse red face was on the bench when she was brought up for hearing. His grammar was poor and he looked at her fiercely.

"Yer charge is fortune tellin'," he said; "are ye guilty?"

"No, I am not guilty. I did no wrong."

"What!" he thundered. "The likes of you belong on the Island." Seeing there was no mercy to be traced in his face, she begged to have the case postponed, and he asked three hundred dollars' bail. To him it was like making a change of money in a purchase. They took the Woman through a long corridor, down many steps into an office. After giving her name, address and age once more, she sat down, too weak to stand on her feet any longer.

"Not that easy, ma'am," she heard someone say and felt herself taken by the arm and led to a gate. A

row of bedsteads were visible through the bars. A moment later she felt herself standing in a cold, barren room with not even a chair to sit on but just beds with wire springs. Utter fatigue overcame her and she looked for a place of support. There was just the wire spring, which gave way as she fell on the edge and remained motionless for three hours.

On the other side there was a drunken woman who could not stand on her feet, but cursed because they gave her nothing to drink. She then played illness, calling for a doctor, moaning and screaming for help. From twelve to three in the afternoon the Woman remained in the confinement of the prison when the good friends came with her bail. They kissed the medium and comforted her, but it seemed her throat was closed for speech, a numbness had overtaken her and she could not talk. The pupils of her eyes were large and dark, a queer, mysterious depth was visible as she looked into space. They put her to bed and told Ronile to watch and let them know when her mother needed them.

"Oh, mother, darling, I did not know where you were at lunch time and the lady upstairs gave me something to eat and told me not to worry that you were called out hastily, but you would be back by three. Where were you, mother, darling? You always tell me what happened," kept on Ronile. "Now, mother," she said seriously, "I am big enough to know and help you."

"In jail," said the mother in a weary tone.

Ronile straightened up to her full height. "I thought so," she said between her teeth. Her fists clenched. "Wait," she said, "some day they will pay for that, they will, they will!" She threw herself on the bed and sobbed to break her heart. "My good little mother, I told you we should go back west. I am tired of this big cruel city. I would rather live with the savage than with these slave-drivers, wouldn't you, mother?"

"No, darling, you must brace up. You have always supported me, and now I need it more than ever before."

"Yes, mother, when I was small, I did not understand, but now I am big and feel the hardship more. Dear Lord," she said, "we have had hard times enough

and mother just wanted to please you. Will you not help us get away from here? Why don't you send an earthquake and crush everything? I don't want to live in this miserable world any more."

"Now, Ronile," said her mother, "stop complaining. The Lord knows what He does, and I will let Him lead me. Don't complain, but pray."

Just then the telephone rang continuously. Everyone wanted to know when the case was coming up. "Monday morning," answered the Woman. Then a familiar noise was heard, the tooting of an automobile horn; then the telephone rang again. It was the rich lady's chauffeur. "Madam wants you to come and go to Jersey with her. Pack your grip and hurry." The Woman thought for a moment and decided that it would be the best thing they could do. Ronile did not wish for an earthquake then. She quickly took the bird and carried it upstairs to a lady who asked to keep him while they were gone, because she enjoyed his singing.

"You need rest, my dear," said the good lady, "for your case Monday. I have secured a lawyer for your defense. Remember it was told and had to come," she said; "it is an operation that puts you under anesthetic but will give you a chance for recovery. It will take all blemish out of earthly weakness and make you a more wholesome, spiritual body."

"You are right," said the medium, and tried hard to forget the cells and bars, the voice and curses of the drunken companion, and the judge who had threatened to send her to the Island. That was a scene before her eyes which she could not wipe away, for she knew mediums who had died in the prisons on Blackwell Island. She told her friend that and was assured that no money would be spared for her release and that money counted in such cases. The lawyer said it was not a serious charge, and told her not to worry.

CHAPTER XLI

“IF THEY HALE YOU INTO COURT BECAUSE OF ME, BE NOT AFRAID”

They were all assembled at the appointed time on Monday morning. The court room was filled with the poorest and the richest to testify that nothing but the best intentions prevailed in the medium's work to help mankind. There was the little old lady who wanted to tell how the medium kept her from starvation and cold; also the detective who paid five dollars for three questions and that the whole sum was turned over to the poor woman, although it was near midnight when the medium still worked and that he found her to be the most humane person he had ever met. There was the young woman who was waiting to tell how she was helped when her son ran away and joined the Navy and then deserted; how the medium had told her his given name and that he was on a ranch in Wyoming and that the guides would impress him to write to her and how five days afterwards she received a letter that he was at the place mentioned by the medium and for five days he dreamed of his mother every night and became so homesick that he had to write.

Madeline, with her baby, was also there. The baby wore a service button on his little coat which told enough. The wealthy gentleman was also present to prove how his wife was cured and never went to another doctor. Another gentleman who was so deaf that he could not secure an auto driving license, testified that now he was able to hear everything. The hall boys were there to testify that they had strict orders from Mrs. Delien not to let anybody upstairs who came asking to have their fortunes told. There were girls who were on the verge of suicide and how happy they had been since the medium opened a different outlook for them. There was a court room full of people of all ages and stages in life to give testimony and hold firm a station where they could commune with their loved ones.

The door opened and everybody stood up. It was the honorable judge. “Oh, Lord,” thought the Woman,

"it is the same one and no witnesses will do me any good here." His stern eyes swept over the crowded court room; his teeth set firmly as if he wanted to steady himself against a crowd of this kind. He walked over toward the bench and began to sway when he beheld a familiar, pretty girl on the front bench winking. His face became gray and ashen. The attendants reached his side and escorted him into the antechamber. After awhile it was announced that they had to summon another judge as his honor was too sick to hold the session.

Among the witnesses ran whispers and eyes met with a meaning expression, "There is a Judge so great He can smite the wicked and with one stroke throw them off the pedestal."

"I thought," said the rich gentleman from up-state, "that something would happen; otherwise I'd lose my faith if God left her alone in an hour of this kind."

The Woman's neighbor was also present. "I am a little late," she said, as she greeted the defendant in the case, "and say, I brought the judge's sweetheart and we took the front seat. I told her to just wink at him; maybe that is why he got sick."

"It was very kind of you to be so interested," said the medium.

"Well," said the other, "you were in trouble, and we have no stone where others have a heart."

"I am very happy about it," said the medium, "but we don't have to do any winking; I will stand my ground."

Two hours passed and the door opened. Again a judge entered upon the scene. His face was still young and sympathetic. He sized up the huge crowd of witnesses with a mixed expression of curiosity and candor. His presence seemed to loosen the tension of the crowd as he mounted the bench where words are weighed more carefully than those of a minister from the pulpit; for the freedom or confinement, life or death of the one concerned depend on the words which come from his lips. It was the third case called. The medium was led to the criminal chair, supported on all sides. She did not seem to feel that she was a criminal as she sat with keen eyes

watching the proceedings. The lady detective was first on the witness stand to testify to the criminal charges, telling of her interview, and she glanced over to the medium and caught her eye.

"I demand the truth," she seemed to say, "for you swore on oath." The Woman thought of the rosary, a symbol of the crucifixion in truth for universal brotherhood. A sad smile swept over her face, for she would rather have been crucified herself than use a symbol of that kind to gain a point. After the witness had finished with her charge, she looked victoriously at the defendant, but the latter had no more looks for anybody. She had sworn to tell the truth; not to plead or protest. Then, too, she remembered the biblical truth: "If they hale you into court because of Me, be not afraid of what you say, for the holy spirit will speak for you."

The judge said, "You are guilty of fortune-telling and you predicted that the witness' brother would return."

"I did," said the voice out of the medium.

"That is against the law," said the judge.

The defendant pointed to the Bible and said: "You make people swear by the story of One who was a prophet; whose whole life was spent in predicting the future. This God in flesh never did harm and was crucified for His prophecy. The fighting has ended on the battlefield, why then is it a sin to say a soldier will return? And this woman gained entrance to my sanctuary by showing a rosary; then wept crocodile tears to arouse my sympathy, just to have me say the words, 'He will return.' What harm was there? Every soldier who saw me before his entry into war did return. Open that Bible and read. You will find the answer to my charge."

The judge mechanically opened the Bible. It was the Twelfth Chapter of St. Luke—the instruction to the disciples: "In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not

be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn ye whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but woe unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you into the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

A stillness prevailed as the judge read these scripture verses, and after finishing he rested his chin on his hand and looked into space, then said: "It is very remarkable that I should read this scripture."

Here the lawyer broke in and said, "Your honor, this is a most extraordinary case; this woman has supernatural power and I beg you to dismiss the case as she did no wrong."

"I know," said the judge, "there is something to it, for I read the books of Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, but if I dismiss the case I will have to leave the bench. She is guilty of predicting and that is against the law."

The voice out of the Woman again spoke out, recalling the story of Joseph; how his own brothers hated him for speaking of the future. Why was Daniel thrown among the lions? Why was St. Catherine beheaded? Why did the bread St. Elizabeth intended for the poor turn to roses in the presence of her tyrannical spouse and

make him a convert? Why was Joan of Arc burned at the stake?"

"Such is the way of the world," said the judge, impressed, "and I represent the law; therefore, I must abide by it and find you guilty by giving you the cheapest fine and have your finger-prints taken."

Here the defendant rose to her full height, looking more like the prosecutor than the culprit. "I know nothing about your laws," she said, "but if you will look in the books you will find that there was a recent decision passed, which takes from magistrates the right to have finger-prints taken unless the defendant wishes to submit to the process." She put up both hands, saying, "You can cut them both off; that is your doing, but you can never get me to admit that I am a criminal."

The judge was quite stunned at the intelligence of such a speech. He left the court room and came back after about ten minutes, out of a cloud of cigarette smoke and remounted the bench, saying, "The woman is right, I cannot force her"; then the court official escorted the Woman out of the court room to the finger-print officials. She told the finger-print man what she had told the judge and went back into the court room without having had the finger-prints taken.

She mounted the stand with judicial authority and said to the magistrate, sweetly: "Judge, let me tell you a few incidents of your past life. I shall begin with—" here the judge jumped off his seat and grabbed the gavel, crying, "Stop!"

"Please let me begin, your honor. I shall begin with an incident that occurred on the—"

"Stop, stop!" cried the judge, with a bang of the gavel. "I fine you fifteen dollars." This ended the court proceeding; the friends fought for the privilege of paying the fine, then led the martyr, as they called her, from the very material court room.

The next day the papers of New York City were filled with the wise talk of the medium and reporters stormed the house. But the gentleman from up-state made sure that his little hero-woman had no more unnecessary callers than he could help. He took the Woman

and Ronile up home, as he called it, but Ronile was worried about her school. Letters came in by the hundreds, proposals and letters of sympathy galore, but they all failed to affect the medium. She answered those that appealed to her and the others she put away and kept on with her spiritual work. Her health, however, failed. The prison seemed to have robbed her of the hearty laugh that Ronile loved so well.

Often she would say, "Smile, mother dear," and then kiss the face of her darling mother, saying: "Let us go west again; I am big now and I want to work. Mrs. Smith will help me to work in pictures." A letter came from a picture concern offering the Woman a good paying position. She summoned her higher counsel and was told to hold out for a time. Then the last blow came which robbed her of the last hold. The superintendent of the building came for the rent; his courage, however, failed him as he looked into the keen, sad eyes of the Woman.

"What is it you want to tell me, Mr. Brook?" she asked.

He cleared his throat, then said: "I am sorry, ma'am, but the landlord, who is a judge, you know, gave me orders to tell you that you could not have your lease renewed. He gave strict orders that no Jews or mediums should have any of the apartments."

"But he doesn't object to women who are kept here by Jews! You used to ask me if I did not know some friends to take apartments here and now—" she could not continue, for a curtain closed before her eyes. "My work is done," she thought.

"I am sorry," he said, moved by her lost expression. "Personally, I have no grievances, and I remember how my wife used to be stiff with rheumatism and that after you said she would lose it, why, it was gone."

"Still, I have to move?" she said.

"Such is the way of the world, ma'am, and I am sorry."

Thus he left the shattered plant that was heartlessly pulled out of the ground of existence where thousands of roots hold on firmly to the stem that supports them,

transmitting the sap of encouragement each day. A judge cast the blow and sharp was the knife that cut apart the stem from the roots to dry up the faithful transmission. The Woman stood dazed awhile, her body becoming weak; the weight of the cross became heavy once more—so heavy that her shoulders seemed to droop, her arms hanging limp; those arms so strong in spirit that fought death so many times and rescued the victims and shielded them in loving embrace.

She walked into the little shrine room and knelt with outstretched arms, asking for deliverance.

“Let me rest at Thy feet, oh, Father. I am footsore and heartsick, my field of toil is changed into a barren desert. The wolves in sheeps’ clothing have robbed me of the ship of existence and I am on a raft. But, Thou merciful Jesus Christ, in whose name I performed all tasks and sacred work, whom I claim to be the compass in my ship of life, let this storm subside, Thou who didst not forsake the disciples in the great storm nor let them feel the pangs of hunger. I loved to serve Thee, Master; lead Thou me on.”

The room suddenly became filled with light, such radiant beams streaming in from all sides of the room, and from the center emerged a Form with outstretched arms, and eyes so full of sympathy and love. The Woman held out her arms to Him as He stood before her and in those eager arms He placed a lamb. A glass of water was standing at the table. He reached for it and as it came nearer to the Woman it turned in color from the transparent fluid to a red, like blood, still it was transparent.

He held it to the Woman’s lips, saying: “I will deliver unto you which I also received, how the Christ died for the sins of men, to fulfill the meaning of the scriptures; That He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve; after that by those who wish to see Him. It is the Father who sends me, the Son, to bring unto you the Holy Spirit of the Triune God.” Thus He gave her three swallows of water, turned to wine, and filled the room with the sweet presence of the Holy Guest who is so near in time of need. Before the lamb the Woman held was

a chalice and from its contents emerged a host in a light like the sun. The Lord of hosts placed it on the tongue of the lamb-bearer; its lights seemed to still shine through the frame that was smitten to despair just a few minutes before. She rose as He laid His hand on her head, drawn magnetically up, and poured once more the light of love and strength into her eyes.

Here He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I am with my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter in thy coming journey and abide with you forever. Ever the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive in flesh when they have slain the body in false precepts, then only comes the awakening; then they build monuments and worship thereon, not to atone for sin and endeavor for betterment but for the stone of idol worship, not for the spirit. If the world would seek the spirit they would see the spirit. They don't know the spirit and condemn the one that holds the key to the very throne of heaven. Thou knowest him and thou believest in him; he therefore livest within thy being and rulest the house thou livest in.

"I will not leave thee comfortless. I will come to thee. They who have my commandments and keep them, they are the ones that love me and she that loveth me shall be loved by my Father and I will love her and will manifest myself to her. The stem is cut from the root, but the stem has borne many seeds that have been carried by the wind of good counsel. They will thrive on a different field of a greater part, in masses, not individuals. Like the leaves from the tree, so the leaves in the book will find new soil in the minds of the multitudes and drive them to a higher aspect of self-denial in truth to abide. Thus the pilgrims form through the pages of past sorrows and the good ship of salvation will cut through the waves to rescue the souls from their watery graves.

Some sleep from exhaustion, some struggling still; every one has a chance if he will. Take thy lamb of patience and follow my footsteps to help my brother-man. For some one prays for each on earth and prayers must be answered. It is the will of the Father.”

When the great host ceased speaking an unaccountable white-and-silver cloud seemed to surround that radiant form of salvation, then a great choir rang out, first in clear, angelic voices that became fainter as the heavenly visitors moved higher to fill the universe with songs of praise and harmony: “*Ecce panis Angelorum, Factus cibus viatorum; Vere panis filiorum, Non mittendus canibus. In figuris praesignatur; quum Isaac immolatur. Agnus Paschae deputatur, Datur manna Patribus.*”

CHAPTER XLII

THE LAST SITTING AND MATERIALIZATION

The summer was nearing its end. September 19th was the medium's birthday; she baked cake and invited all her friends to have coffee and cake after the sitting. There were some of the greatest scientists present to commune or to be convinced of life after death. Some sat on the floor for lack of chairs but they knew it was the last time they would get a message in that blessed place and did not mind how uncomfortable their seat was. The room was darkened and the spirit lights flitted about like glowworms; some shot across the room like comets. Sadness prevailed among both the living and the departed. A house was being closed; its magnet taken away for another purpose. Uncountable embraces have closed to their bosom a hungry heart and a seeking soul to install a new road sign that leads to the gates of everlasting life, pointed out by those who know and have learned the lesson to overcome the material desire of an eye for an eye and ill-gotten wealth that leads to despotism and destruction.

"Shall we get a chance to hear you again?" asked many a one in communication.

"Yes, we are always with you; time will wear out the veil that once seemed so dark and heavy and your continuous endeavor to see and believe wears out the dust that makes the veil impenetrable. Your tears of anguish wash white the sail of that ship of life and in due time you will open that psychic sight to just as clear a view as the outlook toward the clear sky when you behold all the light that first brought life; and that as long as light exists life exists, as they are embodied, one depending on the other. Your light that shines from within, is part of the light that shines from above connected with planetary magnetic threads to the great star that shines always, but mostly when the earth turns darkest. Never condemn the one who has lost his claim to such an inheritance, for they live to buy what glitters and

know not that the greatest of all diamonds shines for each one.

“The merciful creator has well arranged all claims. The lowest shall be the highest, for in sorrow the soul doth grow and reach for the higher aspect, thus staking his claim with renewed labor each day on the ethereal field, above the hail and thunder, above the greed and power to rule. There is enough gold for every one who lives. Each day the last rays of the greatest planet are like the great light from a mother’s loving eyes. The sun, when saying good night, wishes you to retire with a golden blanket; she covers the earth to sleep and wakes it up again with a glow mingled with all colors. The warm beams remove the blanket and wake up all nature’s inhabitants to act and strive in peace and to live the life of the just. Those who disregard these laws soon become unnatural; they must resort to artificial ways in order to achieve the gifts which are so abundantly given in a measure called law. There has never lived one human being that could command and change that law. No matter how powerful and mighty he was, he had to eventually submit to the law and succumb in flesh. This all confirms to you that there is one law, one ruler, one religion; abide by these three: The law of God in Nature, the law to respect everything good that leads to wholesomeness in universal brotherhood.” Thus concluded the lesson.

It was midnight when they were about to close but the medium said, “I feel a strong power that wishes to manifest.” She began to sing softly, “Lead, Kindly Light, Amid The Encircling Gloom.” All joined in the soft, melodious song, when suddenly in the middle of the floor a white cloud became visible. It rose, became larger and then they all saw an arm emerge; then another. Soon a form stood clad in robes like little stars. She walked around greeting everyone and speaking to each. As she walked a crown materialized on her head. It glittered with beautiful jewels.

She came over to the medium and gave her the sign and blessing of the East, saying: “I, too, fought and won; that deed still grows in the minds of mankind.

Love ye one another," then closed the veil. A moment later it opened again, the form, however, stood plainly visible to all assembled, but the head changed. A man stood there; a beard in grizzly form was seen; the crown too had changed. It seemed like Solomon, the wise and just. The veil closed once more and only the head changed. Another face, the crown changed into a golden band around the head. It was Joseph. Thus the forms came, changing rapidly, but so true to existence that all knew they were truly there to help lead them on. The mother of the medium came last.

"Oh, my good mother," she said, quite overcome, "where shall I go?"

"We will lead you west again. Your body needs the rest, it worked overtime and you have sought enough to reach the individual. After you have rested, you must get stronger so as to reach the masses."

They had opened the shade by the window to let the light in, so they could see more clearly. As the form passed the light those on the opposite side saw the transparent figure touch her hard-tested child and kiss her. "The eye of the Father sees all," she said, and disappeared in the middle of the room that was dark once more, but soon a great light became visible, coming from the ceiling and formed into an eye.

Thus closed the last sitting the medium held to serve on the table of spirit communion. It will never be forgotten by those who attended. It must be mentioned that there was more than one medium present and the power of faith showed well its value. The friends of the Woman were not inclined to let her go and tried hard to arrange for a new home, but her health failed, as was mentioned previously, and they were satisfied to let her take a vacation, with the hope of seeing her back at her post in due time. Each one of the members bought something of the household, so the blessed articles would hold the power for them. Thus we find the Woman with her child, now taller than her mother, at the station for the third time. They are going west, hoping to heal the torn wounds so unmercifully rendered by her brothers—Man.



"And we stand between heaven and earth, mother dear, to lead God's breath into hungry souls."—*Page 325.*

CHAPTER XLIII

SISTER RITA

Ronile still carried her little doll, dressed like a Dominican sister. Rita was her name, which was symbolic of the lost for a happy homecoming. Mrs. Delien at one time donated a huge basket of her flowers to a Bazaar given in New York for European war victims. Ronile sold chances and stationed herself near the doll booth and noticed among the many faces, so fairy-like to children, one with just a sweet little face looking out from under a Sister's headgear. She pushed her way through the crowd and finding her mother, told her with eyes gleaming with excitement of the discovery.

"Mother dear, I found the most wonderful doll in the world! A Sister doll, all dressed in white with the cutest little rosary hanging down its side."

"But, my dear," said her mother, "I have spent all the spare money I had for material to make this basket and now I have not the price for anything."

"It may not cost much, mother, and I love her face! Oh, she looked like a Sister of Mercy." She clasped her hands in prayer—the little hands that sat untiringly twisting the little bits of silk into wonderful flowers, but which had no money to get a Sister doll. They walked back just in time to see a purchaser for the doll. A cry of anguish came from Ronile, who had set her heart on it.

"Please don't buy that doll," she said, trying hard to suppress the tears that were rising. "Dear Mother of Jesus, help me get the doll," she whispered in her distress. Hearing this, the mother told the lady to lay it aside. But the other person seemed to ponder on the choice of the doll. "I will pay five dollars," she said.

"And my mother will pay six!" said Ronile, almost out of her mind from fear of losing the doll.

"You shall have it," said the booth attendant, "for you deserve it, trying so hard to sell chances."

"I made all those violets and forget-me-nots and

lilies of the valley," said Ronile in a tone which meant to make them understand that she had earned it, as she hugged the doll close to her and kissed the lips of the merciful Sister Rita. "I never want to lose you," she whispered, "and don't you lose me."

Going home that night she told her mother, when they walked the many blocks from the 96th Street Subway, that she was satisfied with her doll and not to buy anything for her for Christmas.

"It was really more money than I could spare, dear," said her mother. "I had only two dollars and now we have a debt and must pay it."

"I will pay it, mother, with the money in my bank," said Ronile, which she did. This is the way Sister Rita happened to come into Ronile's possession, and every time they came to Chicago, Sister Rita was sitting on the top of the luggage.

It was the first Sunday in October, when they arrived once more in Chicago. Their good friends were at the station with a beautiful touring car to receive the two wanderers once more on the road of life without a destination. They laughed heartily as they saw Ronile running toward them, bundles on all sides, and Sister Rita under her arm, her veil hanging over her face as if to hide in shame because her feet were sticking out in the back, her dress too far above her knees, a very shocking and unfair position for a modest little lady like Sister Rita to be placed in. However, Ronile did not notice the sad predicament of her darling Sister of Mercy. She shook her bundles in an effort to greet the rapidly approaching friends. In that action, Sister Rita's feet shook as if to free herself from the arm of her mistress by the wave of her veil and the shaking of her exposed, stiff little feet.

"Well, well," said Ronile's uncle, as he tried to lift that great big girl, and grabbing the poor doll's head in the attempt. "Have you not outgrown the doll stage yet?"

"No," came the answer, "I will never part with my dear Sister; she always smiles the same good, cheery smile."

"You will never catch a beau as long as you have her under your arm," he kept on, smiling.

"Now stop!" said his wife. "You will make her think of what really should be kept away from her as long as possible."

He sized her up and said to his wife: "If she keeps on she will never need to worry about getting the right one. Every time she comes she looks prettier. I see her growing fast into womanhood," he said, "and good-by boys in a year or two; she will play havoc with their hearts."

"How are the Waters?" asked Mrs. Delien, as their car swiftly purred along the shores of the lake with church bells sounding in the distance.

"Why, they are in California. Albert is conducting a large hotel," came their delighted exclamation.

"I am so happy to hear that," said Mrs. Delien. "It seems good to hear that some people get along materially."

Frank looked at the Woman with an anxious expression. "I see they are very strict with mediums in New York." He wanted to express his warm feeling of friendship and sympathy regarding her misfortune, but could not just find the right words to convey them. He looked at his wife for help. She shrugged her shoulders, then looked at the Woman at her side with a worried expression. The good, humorous Frank could not feel quite at ease to see the little form cowering in the corner of the spacious car, looking lost and hopeless across the clear mirror of water.

"Say! What are you dreaming about?" he shouted.

The Woman jumped a little out of her reverie at the sound of his voice, then smiled contentedly. "Oh, I was just digesting the sound of the church bells and was talking to our Father."

"Still," said Frank, "after all you experienced?" He found his connection and was bound to let her know that as long as we have no wings, we should not attempt to fly, and told her that. "See," he said, "we may fall in the attempt." He felt his remark was somewhat severe, so tried to use a more lenient flow of speech.

"Gosh," he said. "Is it that Ronile has grown so tall, or have you shrunk? You sure look smaller than I ever saw you."

"Well," said Ronile, seeing her mother's hurt expression at Frank's previous remark of flying too high, "Mother has been ill all the way, uncle, and is not well yet. Last night, she was as cold as ice and I rubbed her a long time. I could not even feel her pulse." They were at the door by this time. The house was on Kenmore Avenue. "You live in a lovely house, now," cried Ronile, happily, as she sized up the spacious hall. When they entered the smaller hall, Ronile ran to Hansy, the canary. She spoke to the little bird and he chirped back and bit into her finger.

"What do you think of that?" said Frank, "he never does that for us and it is three years since he saw her and he remembers her; does the same stunts to her, the little rascal!"

CHAPTER XLIV

“BIMBI”

“What did you do with your bird?” he asked. “I hear you had him trained to wear a little hood.” Ronile was not easily forced into a crying spell, and Frank could not recall ever having seen her cry, but she walked away into the other room and wept to break her heart. Mrs. Delien then told how she bought the bird from the superintendent of the house, and when they went for a week-end trip Mr. Brook would take charge of Bimbi, the bird. There was a lady living in the same house by the name of Mrs. Jorgensen, who met Ronile on the stairs taking the bird down to the basement. She begged Ronile to let her take care of Bimbi, as she often stood by the door and listened to his wonderful singing. The friends from Summit, New Jersey, were waiting for them downstairs, so Ronile gave the neighbor the bird and went for him on Monday morning. “I did not like the idea, and told Ronile that I had a presentiment that no good could come out of it. However, Ronile, with childish faith in the good of mankind, believed Bimbi to be happier up in the sunny corner apartment than in the basement. On Monday, about eleven o’clock in the morning when we returned from the country, we saw a crowd of people standing on the park side, looking into the trees. Mr. Brook had a large cage on a high stepladder, and was trying to coax the bird into it. Ronile saw the crowd first and ran across the street and before I knew it she was among the crowd, calling, ‘Bimbi! Come, my precious darling birdie.’ Bimbi was up in the tree and at the sound of her voice flew down toward her, but the crowd frightened him and he flew away. ‘How long has he been up there?’ I said to Mr. Brook. ‘Oh, about three hours, I am afraid,’ he said, ‘in the heat and he has no water to drink—too bad.’ Then I told the crowd to disperse, which they did, and we went upstairs into our shrine room and prayed. Then Ronile climbed out on the fire-escape and

called. Soon Bimbi came flying over to Ronile and she picked him up and brought him in.

“‘See, mother,’ she said, ‘you did not have to give those boys a dollar and a half to climb the tree and frighten poor Bimbi more.’

“‘You are a sad sight,’ I said to Bimbi, as I held the little fly-away and wiped the dirt from his wings. Ronile had gone upstairs to get his cage.

“‘Mrs. Jorgensen came down crying that she was so sorry, and said, ‘Now you will never let me have him again.’

“‘Perhaps,’ said Ronile, ‘you could not help it, and you can have him when we go away again.’

“‘We furnished all of Bimbi’s food, and when the furniture left,’ here the Woman gave a deep sigh, “‘why Bimbi was lost in the bare rooms, so Ronile left him upstairs until the morning of our departure. When all was ready she went to get her bird to take along. Mrs. Jorgensen cruelly refused to let her have the bird, saying Ronile had given it to her.

“‘Ronile came running down, broken-hearted, crying in choking sobs, ‘Mrs. Jor—gen—sen re—fused to give me my Bimbi.’ I went up and the wicked woman flew at me with a mountain of reproaches, saying she would rather let him fly out of the window.

“‘What do you think I spend my time for?’ she shrieked.

“‘I will pay you, madam, but for the sake of the child’s faith in the good of mankind, give her back the bird,’ I said.

“‘Yes,’ shrieked the other, ‘faith, faith! You fakir and fortune-teller.’

“‘Just then her husband came on the scene. I appealed to him, saying, ‘Here are ten dollars for your trouble in keeping the only pet my daughter had, and trusted you with.’ There was no human expression in either of their faces—animals, I thought. Mrs. Jorgensen at that time had a face like a rat, her upper teeth protruding in a vicious attempt to bite; her husband’s face was broad and stubby with watery eyes, making him look like a bulldog.

“‘Keep your ghost money,’ he sneered, ‘God only knows how you earned it in letting all those men into your ghost room.’”

“‘Yes, God knows, and may He forgive you,’ I said.

“I looked over at poor Bimbi and wanted to walk over and say good-by to him, but both stood by the cage. Bimbi hopped on top of the swing and chirped his farewell. I said, ‘Bimbi, I hope you can rap on their soul with every sound you utter henceforth, and remind them how they stole you from your loving little Ronile.’”

Tears came rolling down the Woman’s cheeks as she related the sad experience.

“What is his business?” inquired Frank. “I’ll have the law get after a man like that; why, that is getting some one’s else property under false pretenses.”

“He works as a camera man in the movies,” said Mrs. Delien, “but please don’t bother, the law of justice will take care of that.”

“How do you like our little place?” asked Frank’s wife; “it is just what we wanted.”

“Yes, it is, but too small for visitors.”

“Well, Frank dear,” said the wife, “they can spend all day with us and sleep in the other place.”

“Did you not find an apartment for us?” asked Mrs. Delien.

“Oh, my dear, we looked all over, there is nothing to be found, but we have a lovely room and bath for you with a widow; she goes to business and is nice and quiet.”

“Suppose we take all the things up there before dinner,” said Frank.

CHAPTER XLV

THE GREATEST CREED

"Well, how do you like it?" he asked, as they placed the trunks that had just arrived.

"Immensely," replied the grateful visitor. "But it is not for working."

"You don't expect to work? You must rest at least a month," he said. So she did.

The next time Frank's wife met the landlady she asked her how she liked her New York friends.

"I never see them," said the other. "I come here before they get up, but I see they have a Sister doll sitting on the bed. I hope they are not Catholics."

"What difference would that make," asked Frank's wife sharply, "if they are respectable?"

"Well, I am a Scientist and the same people always live with me," said the other.

"Well, if the dress of a poor little doll changes your opinion of people's character or religion you had better ask Mrs. Delien about it. I have known the lady for eighteen years and never worried in what way she serves her Maker. All I know is that as long as I have known her she has been respectable and supported herself and child honorably."

"I don't doubt that for a minute," said the other, somewhat smitten; "I only wondered because she has the Aquarian Gospel also and that surely is not Catholic."

"Don't my friends suit you?"

"Oh, yes, they do; I only asked an innocent question, that is all."

"Well, keep your innocent thoughts and don't bother about the question," said Frank's wife, and left.

Four weeks passed. Mrs. Delien recovered rapidly and wondered where the great good Gardener would find soil to plant her. It was Sunday morning, and was raining. Ronile walked into the hall to call up Uncle Frank to let him know they were ready for him to get them in the machine. A knock came at the door and Mrs. Delien

found her landlady inquiring how they felt in her lonesome place.

"Of course, you are never here during the day, so that breaks the monotony. Say, I wondered and wondered when I dusted your room," pointing to the doll, Sister Rita, and the Book; "these two don't fit."

"Perhaps not in your mind," came the answer from Mrs. Delien. "All things are placed by conditions made by the Omniscient Creator."

Ronile came back saying, "Uncle is still in bed and said to call a taxi."

"No, we will walk," said Mrs. Delien.

"But you will get wet," interrupted the landlady.

"We don't mind the rain, as the same power that created us has made the rain, and we love it—the clear, soothing drops—it cannot harm us if we don't accept it in a harmful mood."

"Why, you talk like a Scientist!" said the other. "What are you, anyway?"

"One of God's children, your sister," came the answer.

"Don't you belong to any particular creed or faith?"

"Yes, we belong to the oldest faith and the oldest church, built in ourselves. The foundation is faith in one another, the walls are shields of mercy for our brother man and the religion is universal love in the welfare of the brotherhood of man. That is the best way we can please our Father in keeping His commandments, Love Ye One Another."

"Say," said the landlady, "I will call up my friend. He can take you along on his way; he often picks me up."

"No, no, thanks, we will not accept the kind offer. Your friend is a married man."

"Who told you that?" asked the eager landlady.

"Your husband."

"But my husband is dead!"

"Yes, he has departed, but is not dead," came the answer. Then the medium told her the name of the husband, how long he had left his body and the cause of his spirit departure.

"My, that is interesting; how does my husband look?"

"He was a Swede," came the answer, and walking into her drawing-room, she pointed out his picture among many. "Here," she said as she walked over to a group-picture, "is your family in Wales." She even spoke the sentence in dialect.

"You said that just like my husband did," said the widow with tears in her eyes. "My, you are a wonderful woman!" she kept on.

The medium laid her hands on the other's shoulders and looked lovingly into her eyes, saying, "Now, my dear, you will not wonder about Sister Rita and the Aquarian Gospel; you will have something else to think about."

"I hope," came the beseeching reply, "that you will not limit your message from my dear husband."

"I will tell you all you should know and for today it is all you can stand to balance evenly the scale of justice in dealing with mankind." They walked out into the rain and breathed deeply the moist air and cooling draught—the blessing of the Father.

"Well," said Frank in the afternoon, "this is no day for joy-riding." He yawned lazily, then said: "Now you quit writing, otherwise my whole day is gone. What is it that is so important today?"

"Oh," replied Mrs. Delien, "I wrote to the Waters, and told them we were coming to San Francisco, and will start next Sunday."

"What? You are leaving?"

"Yes, I don't find a suitable place; everything is high here and in San Francisco we can live in our old home much cheaper."

"Could you not give tests here?" he asked.

"Oh, she tried," said the wife, "but I did not want to tell you about it. We went one evening to the West Side with a lady who belongs to a class there and the medium would not let us in because we were not members. But Mrs. Delien told her if she was a good medium she would see that we came with good intentions. You should have seen how she spoke up and told her of the guides

that were around and it was acknowledged by the members that Mrs. Delien was right and you know, Frank, she told each one what ailed them."

"Spare me," said Frank, who had no use for that kind of stuff, as he called it. "What is that place? A dump where people discard their trouble?"

"Some take it that way," joined in Mrs. Delien. "Some bring help and others take it."

"I suppose," said Frank, "she did not object to your giving tests to her class?"

"No," said his wife, "she told her members that they were having a treat and to appreciate it."

"What did she pay you?" he asked, looking at Mrs. Delien.

"I did not go for earthly gain," she replied.

"But you worked to serve God and man! If mediums hold the key to heaven, which some claim, then that other medium should have lent you a hand in getting established."

"It was not the wish of the Father, as He wants me to work in other fields."

"I say so," said his wife, "and if I can help it you will not give another test. Your heart is weak. Why, when we came home she fainted."

"Oh, that was the time!" said Frank. "I tell you, little woman, you have done your share of scrubbing in the reformatory of life; resort to other means; write or make flowers; but the other work will bring you to your grave before your time."

"Oh, but when the time comes for the body to enter the grave," said the Woman, "my field of toil will be in the harvest time and all those that I helped to ease the burden will work on that Field of Deity and welcome me home."

"What did she tell the other medium?" asked Frank of his wife.

"You should have been there; she told her if she wanted God's presence to conduct her sittings in the best room of her house and not in the cellar with nothing but the furnace and ashes as ornaments."

"It is a shame," said Frank, "that just you should

pay such a price and never ask a cent from anybody, and those who use this science for just a money-making scheme are free to get it under false pretenses."

"Some must ask for pay to live," said the medium. "I often felt weary when healthy, prosperous looking young men came to see me to get my time and comfort, then left without considering that I was weak afterwards—to do something else in order to live."

"That's why you are foolish," said Frank impatiently, "to waste good, valuable time."

"God rules my disposition," she said, "and every day's work is laid out for me; I do His will."

"So you don't think you could stay?" he kept on, "I don't like to see you go West again."

"But I want to go," said Ronile, "I love California."

"No, you won't until you have painted Trixie." That was his fox terrier.

"How can I?" asked Ronile. "She will not sit quiet for one minute."

"Why don't you get a quiet impression in your mind?" asked her mother. "Call on your guide; he will help you."

After awhile Frank's wife took Ronile aside and told her of her uncle's birthday the following Wednesday, and to try to have the picture for him.

"I will," said Ronile and came back.

"Now, Ronile," said Frank, "look at that beautiful lamp shade, with all the fairies and birds and flowers, that you made; it ought to be easy to paint poor old Trixie."

Going to bed Ronile prayed for an inspiration, and suddenly a golden light shot across the room; a face became visible. "Rembrandt!" Ronile cried. She reached out her hands and clasped them together, then fell fast asleep.

"What did Rembrandt tell you, dear?" asked her mother as they were dressing next morning, earlier than usual.

"Oh, mother, he said to sit this morning from ten to twelve and from two to four in the afternoon."

"I am very happy, dear," said her mother, "that you

understood him for I, too, heard him say it. So that is why you woke up yourself this morning."

"Yes, mother dear, we want to take a walk along the lake to get strength."

At ten o'clock Ronile had everything ready in the sun parlor, where Trixie took her nap after her run on the beach. This gave Ronile a chance to sketch her. At twelve o'clock Trixie jumped down, looking for her dinner, so all took lunch and then went to the lake and Ronile kept Trixie busy by throwing a piece of wood into the water. The dog ran after it and brought it on shore, then buried it, becoming so tired that at two in the afternoon she was ready for her rest by the window and wanted to doze off, but Ronile made a sound like a cat, remarking afterwards that she could not do it again if she tried, and Trixie looked steadily in the direction the sound came from. Ronile was quick in getting the expression of the eyes and face. By four o'clock a life-like picture of Trixie was almost finished on the canvas. It was indeed a surprise to Frank when at his birthday dinner the picture stood ready.

"Keep it up," he said after kissing his little partner, as he called her; "you will make good in this world."

"Why, uncle! They offered me a position at Abbott's and mother will not let me go."

"I don't blame her," said Frank. "You have talent, but you need technic, and a few years of schooling won't hurt your art."

"So you think I should send her to art school?" inquired her mother.

"By all means, don't let her bury her talent; send her to a good school."

"Los Angeles is the place," said one of the guests at the dinner table. "There is one right at Westlake Park. Why, it inspires one to see the building alone. Some general donated his mansion for art."

"I should love to attend art school," said Ronile to her mother, when they were alone.

"First, dear, I will see that I get orders from the large stores, for we must find a way to earn money, especially if you want to study art. All those schools charge a tuition fee."

"Now, Ronile," said Frank, as he handed her a large box of candy to nibble at on the train, "you must try hard to become an artist, for the next trip we make will be to—to—burr—to California, and we will be tired and dusty and need a good rest, so be sure you have a home big enough to keep us with you."

"I am going to try hard, dear uncle, and make you as happy as you have made us."

"Well, if you only keep your happy smile, old pal, it will be enough," said Frank. "Good-by, good luck, God bless you."

CHAPTER XLVI

POP LESSER'S MYSTERIOUS PHONE CALLS

They took no stop-over at Los Angeles. Mrs. Delien felt that it was nearing Christmas-time and flowers must be turned out fast, the larger order for Chicago as well as the new orders for San Francisco. It gave them courage to work. The Waters were at the station and insisted on a visit.

"Try it, and if you don't like it you can look for something better," said Mrs. Waters.

This time they lived in the Richmond District near Golden Gate Park. Every evening at sundown they would walk to the park and watch the sunset over the Golden Gate, and play ball, then come back with glowing cheeks—it was such fun, and so wonderful to Ronile. No one knew of their arrival except the Waters. In the midst of their flower-making, Ronile looked for the address of the Lesser family.

"They have moved," she said as she noted the address and telephone number.

"You may call them this evening," said her mother.

An afternoon never crept more slowly for Ronile than this one, but five-thirty came at last and the work was laid aside. She called the number given in the telephone directory for Lessers, and said, "Hello, is this Mr. Lesser?"

"Junior," came the answer.

"Alfred?"

"Yes, who is this?"

Mrs. Delien took the receiver from Ronile and said, "Now, I caught you trying to steal my girl, you good-for-nothing."

"Who wants your girl?" came the answer.

"You are trying to steal her."

"Aw, go on, nix, you're off," and bang went the receiver.

Ronile doubled up with laughter. "Oh, mother," she said, "we will do that every day."

The next day Molly Lesser answered. "It's that woman again, papa," they heard her say.

Next came Papa Lesser. "Hello," he said.

"Oh, you dear," came the voice through the phone.

"Say, woman, I thought you said this here was a she-devil, why she calls me dear."

Then Molly said, "It can't be the same one."

"Hello, who are you?" came pop's gruff voice again.

"Yes," came a sweet answer. "Why, sweetheart, don't you know me?"

"What the Heck, woman; has Alfred got a love affair?" they heard him say to Molly, then through the phone, "Say, kid, I am the old man, my boy ain't home yet," and bang went the receiver.

The third evening Frances was there and her husband answered their call.

"I'll bet that's the mysterious girl again," said Pop.

"Hello, is that you, Alfred?"

"No, this is his brother-in-law," came the answer, then a hurried voice of "Oh, daddy, take the baby. I want to talk to that hussy; she won't flirt with my hubby."

"Hello, Frances dear, how is the baby?"

"Say, papa, she knows me, and asks for the baby." Next came the healthy cry of the Lesser offspring.

"That's a boy, all right," said Mrs. Delien, hardly able to keep from laughing outright.

"Will you please tell me who you are?" came the question.

"Oh, darling Frances, someone who loves every hair in your head."

"Well," came the snippy answer, "if I had you here I'd pull every hair out of your head," bang—silence once more.

"Mother," cried Ronile, "I have not seen you so happy in a long time, not since we lived at Lessers."

"Oh, darling, it is the same vibration of that wholesome Lesser family, and to think that Frances has a baby! God bless it and all of them."

"Shall we ever get this order out, mother? I am dying to see them."

"So am I, but duty comes first, and we are so happy in our anticipation of seeing them soon."

The fourth evening Alfred answered the call on the phone. Ronile asked him how he was.

"Oh, fine, how are you?" came the answer.

"Just dandy."

"Is this Dorothy?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Say, Dot, you talk different."

"Do I? Say, Alfred, will you come and see me at a friend's house this evening?"

"Maybe," he said.

"Oh, do come, Alfred, I would love to see you."

"All right," said Alfred.

Then another voice spoke up, "Say, kid, this is the old man; I want to know what my son is up to, so I butted in."

"Well, Mr. Lesser, if you want to come out, too, we will be so glad to see you."

"So will I," said Mrs. Delien, butting in.

"Say, Molly, that sounded like the woman, those two belong together," they heard him say.

"What's your address?" asked Alfred. "I'll be out sure. Pop, put it down."

"Do you mind my coming?" pop asked over the phone.

"No, no, you can come, too," then, "There's a hole in the bottom of the sea," she sang, and Pop Lesser said, "There is something familiar in that tone of voice; she knows my favorite song and all the family, ding it! I'm not nosey but I want to find out and will go with you, Al."

"Well, I won't let you go out there alone at night. There are only a few buildings around, and for all you know you might be held up."

"Well, now," said her spouse, with pride, a happy presentiment in his big heart, "if you don't want to lose me, old woman, you'd better come along."

"That's just what I am going to do. It may be a trick of some girl of Al's, but her mother would not keep it up for four days." A heavy fog was creeping in from

the ocean. "My, this gives me the creeps; that fog-horn tooting all the time. Give me the old part of the town near the mission. It suits me," said Molly as they were nearing the given address. It was a new two-story building, three large French windows showed elegant draperies.

"Gee," said Alfred, "she must be rich; look at that lamp, ma."

"That surely cost fifty dollars," agreed Molly. They timidly rang the bell.

"Is Dorothy here?" asked Alfred, his hat in his hand.

"Yes," came a familiar voice, "come right upstairs." Mrs. Delien turned on the victrola. It was a chime piece which played, "There's a Land That is Fairer than Day," and sang the words of Molly's favorite song.

"Say, woman," they heard the boss say, "this smells good."

"Like a church," said Molly.

"It's incense," explained Alfred.

They walked in, the French door opened mechanically, and as soon as they entered Ronile and her mother grabbed them and hugged them till they were almost breathless from the shock.

"What, the dingbusted, it's Ronile and her ma! By Jove! Such a surprise! Say!" he said, looking at Ronile, "I just came to beat the daylights out of the girl who was flirting with my boy, not even myself did she spare, a poor old man with hair almost white. I will have to call up Frances and tell her who it is. She wanted to pull your hair out."

"No," said Molly, "we are going to spring the surprise on them as they did on us. Can you come to dinner tomorrow evening?" asked Mrs. Lesser.

"I think we can manage it," said Mrs. Delien.

After the Lessers had gone, Ronile said, "Mother dear, there is one wonderful point about the Lessers, they never ask about our troubles or yesterday; you always laugh and forget when you are around them."

"It is true, dear," replied her mother. "They live in the present and don't ponder what was or might be.

Today is for them. They have the fortunate faculty of making the best of today. God bless and keep them so."

The same pranks were played on Mr. and Mrs. Handel. Annabelle was betrothed. A dough-boy was her choice.

"Oh," said Mrs. Handel, "why did you not take your old room and come to us? We would have given you the same rate as years ago."

"Our visit to San Francisco is only temporary," said Mrs. Delien, "the friends we are staying with are going to make an auto trip to Los Angeles and beg us to accompany them."

"What a pity," said Daddy Handel, "we thought sure you would belong to us again."

"Perhaps later on, my good friends," said the Woman, with a happy gleam in her eyes. "It is God's will that we should go, as Ronile wants to attend an art school and I will have a new field for flowers."

"You are right, dear," said Mrs. Handel, "and to think you can travel through wonderful California in an automobile, out in the good fresh air all the time."

"When I have made lots of money," said Ronile, "I will buy a car and come up and get you."

"When will that be?"

"Oh, in a year perhaps."

"Hold your thumb on that, Ronile," said Daddy Handel. "I don't doubt for a minute that you will; your face alone is worth a fortune, seems to me, so long as you hold that baby smile."

"You said it, dada dear," chimed in his wife, "she grew tall and big, but it's the same sweet Ronile smile, with the same wistful, fearless eyes. Come here, darling, and kiss your Mama Handel again."

After they had gone Ronile said, "If I did not want to go to that art school, I would like to stay, but it may not be long and we will see their sweet, dear faces again."

The holidays were over and our party was ready to journey south.

"Have a good time," said Pop Lesser, when he came to clasp the dear little hands, that could twist the ribbons and make flowers as good as Nature, in his big warm

hands, as if to shield them forever. Holding on to Mrs. Delien's hands he said, "Look at this, Molly; why this woman has regular lumps on her wrists."

"I knew it!" said Molly, "it's from twisting the leaves and stems of those ribbon flowers, the poor thing," she kept on. "I am glad you are going to ride this way, it will at least rest your hands and nerves."

"Oh, my Daddy Lesser," said Ronile, as she threw her arms around his neck, "I don't like to leave you now. I love you more than ever." He blew his nose, the tears were coming fast and he had to check them.

"I hope you don't get too much rain on the way," he said as he shook hands with Mr. Waters, "but as long as you have these two beams along, all the rain in the world cannot harm you."

Molly Lesser was crying, "Just when we thought we had them close, they slip through our loving arms again."

"Such is the way of the world," said the Woman, and the car sped on, whizzing five leaves from God's tree of mankind to another destination.

CHAPTER XLVII

ONWARD TO A NEW DESTINATION

Although the rainy season had set in, the sun shone all the way until they reached San Juan Babtisto, where they stopped overnight, and they hardly had the car under cover when the rain poured for an hour, and then it cleared, giving them a most glorious view of the setting sun. They walked through the old mission and the Woman sat alone outside in silent meditation.

"Oh, what a heavenly rest!" she thought, and prayed, "Oh, good, gracious Father who led us so carefully to this place of quietude and rest." A picture arose before her, showing a book with innumerable unwritten pages, and a pen was pressed into her hand to write. "Oh, some day I may, my Lord, Thy will be done."

Next morning they paid another visit to the mission, then proceeded on their journey—such wonderful sights! The rain clouds hung over the mountains but the roads were dry and cheerful. As they passed through Paso Robles (Ronile called it "Pass the Bubbles") they found the streets in that pretty city were not macadamized, and Mrs. Waters said it would not be any fun driving if all the roads were like those.

The second evening they stopped at San Luis Obispo; it rained and after they arrived they praised God for the wonderful trip. There were thousands of blue jays and meadow-larks as they passed along the mountains; the balmy air was soothing to the nerves of all and forgotten was the yesterday and tomorrow was not thought of. They passed through as though on wings; a mild bed of existence with sweet mountain air.

"We will take our time," said Mr. Waters, "and stop over at Ventura."

"I don't care if we go on forever like this," said Ronile, contentedly.

"Nor do I," chimed in the rest in one breath.

"Ventura, you beautiful spot," said Mrs. Delien, as they stopped at one of the oldest hotels, with its high ceilings and frescoed walls, and Spanish balconies. They all said they loved the dear old place.

The next morning they went to the mission to thank the Lord for His blessings, then proceeded on their journey. First came mountains and wonderful fields of peas. Soon they came to the orange groves, and the road was turning into an avenue of palms. Mountains on both sides and orange groves in the middle.

"Dear Lord, how wealthy art Thou in Thy possessions."

"This is the last mountain," said Mr. Waters. "Here is Laurel Canyon and we will soon be in Hollywood."

"Happy and light the hearts of those who in each other's faith repose," sang Ronile, from "The Bohemian Girl," as they stopped in front of the Hollywood Hotel. There were no rooms to be had, this being the busy season.

"Well, I have the address of some lovely people that we met on the train; they might know of a place," said the Woman.

"Why, that is only a few blocks from here!" said Mr. Waters, so off they went and found Mr. and Mrs. Roy and their three sons in a beautiful bungalow at the address given. Seeing the car, Mrs. Roy ran out and greeted her train friend affectionately.

"Where are you stopping?" she asked.

"God's Hotel, called the Universe," said Mrs. Delien, laughingly.

"You will never find accommodations at the hotels, my dear, you had better stay with us. We own our home and feel secure," she said. "My, won't the boys be surprised to see Ronile! They have not stopped talking about her to this day."

"I shall be so glad to see them," said Ronile later, after they had taken a refreshing bath and dressed for dinner.

Benny was the youngest and came home first. "Who is upstairs, mother?" he asked as he heard unusual footsteps.

"It will be a lovely surprise and you'd better get your lessons while the surprise takes a rest."

Harry was the second son, he was attending a football game. "Don't go in the east room upstairs, Harry," said his father as he saw him going upstairs to dress for dinner.

"Who are the two extra covers for, mother? Where is the company?" kept on the oldest son, Ray, a good-looking soldier boy.

"You will see presently," she said, as she rang the gong for dinner, and footsteps were heard on the stairs, and the eyes of the three boys varying in size were riveted on the staircase.

"Oh, it's Ronile, my train friend!" said Harry, and ran to greet her.

Benny was a bashful lad, but his broad smile and constant glance at Ronile gave proof of pleasure at seeing her.

"Since when have you grown a mustache?" Ronile asked Ray, quite aware of the change in his appearance.

"That's old," said Harry, "I have a name for each hair."

"Stop teasing, Kid," said his big brother.

"Well, they came out so slowly, that I had time to christen each one," said Harry.

"There is a lady across the street who wants to rent her little house," said Mrs. Roy, "and we will go over after dinner. I think it will just suit you, Mrs. Delien."

"Why, mother, it looks like a doll house," said Ronile.

"What rent do they ask?" inquired Mrs. Delien before becoming interested in the inviting little house.

"One hundred and fifty dollars a month."

Ronile turned to her mother with a lost expression, as she knew it was beyond their reach.

"It is worth it," said Mrs. Roy afterwards, not knowing that they were depending on the money they made by twisting flowers out of ribbons, and that paid little in spite of the world's highest reward. "I thought you were immensely wealthy," she said afterwards; "you look so well clothed and refined."

"That is our wealth, dear Mrs. Roy," said the Woman, "but finances are low with us and thirty dollars a month is all I can spare until we know what our future prospects will be."

"You are right there," said Mrs. Roy. "It is not wise to live up all of one's income."

The birds were singing in happy glee. "See, the One who created those takes care of us," said the Woman. "If we worry, we will hinder His coworkers in finding the right place." That night they looked up at the stars and prayed ardently. "Merciful Master, Jesus, who leads us onward, we are standing in faith and seek Thy road sign."

"It is a humble abode where goldfish are playing in the sunshine," said a voice.

"Oh, my Lord, lead me on to the station to serve," said the medium.

"You must lay under cover for new sprouts to thrive new fruit to feed the multitude."

"Shall I attend art school, dear Master?" asked Ronile.

"It is well for a short period of time. Thou, my child, must enter a field of wild flowers and there thou must unfold like a lily with the petals ever white in purity and goodness. It will be a hard soil where many worms will try to gnaw away thy roots of purity, but the Lord shall be thy gardener. Then keep thyself in His care by opening thy heart to better things and give mankind the universal love of brotherhood and not the lower portion to feed the worms who seek in darkness to sap the life out of a beautiful plant and leave it to die."

"Give me Thy Mother's protection, oh, Lord," said Ronile, in emotional consecration.

"Thy cloak, my child, must change its colors daily, like a rainbow, so brilliant, but keep the moth of habit from that garment, each shade means an example for which the multitude is craving. Thy face shall find expression in their heart to lead them on to feel the spirit-power. Thy deeds must manage with the sun's rays to give entrance to those in darkness, like a well-shaped

crystal, carefully cut with the tool of deprivation on the young and tender body; all the hard blows of life have not caused a flaw in the brilliancy of thy existence. Thine eyes still seek the Father and power above—thy smile encourages the heart-sick—hold well enshrined those faculties so generously bestowed upon you.”

“Amen,” said Ronile.

“Thy will be done,” said her mother, as the voice and spirit vanished.

Ronile went to school and was overjoyed with the teachers and all. The mother looked daily for the place so lovingly pointed out to her. One day they passed a place and found a goldfish pond with pretty arbors and shrubs.

“I am drawn to this place, will you stop the car a minute?” the Woman asked of her friends.

“Well, we may have a vacancy in a month or so, the folks here have bought a home, but don’t know when they can move,” said the landlord, a kind-looking gentleman with a sheriff’s badge under his coat.

“I will wait,” said the Woman, relieved as she paid a deposit on the rooms. Thus they came into the home pointed out by the all-seeing eye.

The Waters gave a dinner and many guests from the Moving Picture Colonies were present.

“Oh,” said Karl van Reel after meeting Ronile, “she is the type you need, Lloyd.”

“I say so,” came the answer from the manager of a new company. There was a conference a few minutes later and Ronile was stationed at a point in the game of life. One week’s trial and a good salary was offered her.

“Oh, mother, I am so glad, I can work all during vacation,” said Ronile as the directors were drinking their after-dinner coffee in the arbor near the goldfish pond.

“I am afraid that after having made all those pictures, and wasted all that gasoline on my car to have you registered, that it would not be fair for you to go to school and paint, to starve later on,” said Karl.

“No, not if I can help it; my mother needs my help and I will sign the contract and work,” said Ronile.

“See, my darling mother,” she said, “you would have to

twist leaves for three months to earn what I get in a week."

"But, sweetheart, Sunday we will go to church and thank God among the masses. I hear a bell every Sunday morning, so we will go there."

It was a small white church on Santa Monica Boulevard. They entered and found mostly old and feeble people. The pastor delivered a wonderful sermon, each word came from his soul, and the old faces nodded in assent.

"My first pay will be divided, and we will give the old folks a party," said Ronile. It was the chapel of the Old People's Home. Thus changed the colors on the cloak of the rainbow each day in different work and scenes, to do good on earth.

Often they would climb Krotona Hill and visit a retired woman doctor, a sweet, white-haired lady with her daughter, Lucile, a woman of the finest tact and intelligence. The daughter and Ronile were painting beautiful scenes while Mrs. Delien sat on the porch of the wonderful villa on the hill overlooking Los Angeles and Hollywood. In the distance was the ocean—a silvery body of water reaching out to meet the sky.

"My dear doctor," said Mrs. Delien, "you are my elixir in life, such peace and quietude is balm to the soul."

"Yes, it works that way on everyone who comes here," said the doctor, "and you, my dear, look so much better. Your step is lighter and your face younger than when I first saw you."

"Yes, I have thrown off the harness of strife, the weight of the cross bears no more on my shoulders. I am happy in this soil and am anxious to thrive," said the Woman.

"How are you getting along with your book?" asked her friend.

"Oh, dear, I have forgotten to tell you. I met a young lady at church who agreed to type it for me. She is a lovely and wholesome girl."

"God surely turns everything your way, my dear," said the doctor. "My daughter said yesterday that the

play you wrote for Ronile was considered a tremendous success."

"I hope, doctor, that you will reserve me that corner lot, for I want to have a shrine room like yours with the star of the east in the stained glass window and most of all your blessing," said the Woman, as they walked into the shrine room.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE JEWELLED CROSS

As they entered the shrine room, the doctor handed the Woman a gold cross, set with pearls and amethysts, saying, "May your burdens never be heavier than this, and may your eyes ever shine as bright as the jewels set therein."

"Mother," called the doctor's daughter, as they entered, "we missed our tea time. Ronile finished her picture, 'Daghib, the Hindoo,' for your shrine room, and look at his eyes, they follow you all over. I made good progress with my scene, too. There was great help in the blessing from the evening breeze and northern light."

"The breath of God," said Ronile, "and just think, mother, a wonderful meaning."

The doctor kissed Ronile on the forehead, saying, "My child, keep on inhaling the breath of God in love and devotion. You are already leading them up to higher aims and ambitions."

A noise of cars puffing up the hill was heard. "I wonder who could have seen us coming up here," said Ronile. Such a crowd of passengers emerged from the cars, carrying baskets filled with goodies.

"Oh, doctor," cried Karl van Reel, "forgive us, dear doctor, if we are intruding, but we were so lonesome for nourishment of the soul as well as of the body, that we brought the food for the body and you will have to give us the spiritual."

"Since when did you become so anxious?" asked Mrs. Delien.

"Well," chimed in Roger, Karl's youngest brother, "since you and Ronile practice these things here, everybody is taking painting lessons and joining classes in concentration."

"Say, ladies," said Mr. Hirschwald, who was an artist as well as a director, "this is the most wonderful sphere on earth. Ah, such a blessing! See the millions of lights blinking above and below."

"And we stand between heaven and earth, to lead God's breath into hungry souls," said Ronile.

One of the younger chaps took Ronile's hand, leading it to his lips. "Ah, my star," sighed he, "I am the most hungry soul in the world, and pine for a look of affection from your adorable eyes."

"Don't rob the cradle," said Karl, "and get the fast climbing star vexed with your love sighs."

"You are right," said Mr. Hirschwald, "if I see any man trying to lead this young lady out of the road of success, he will have to reserve a room in the hospital for an indefinite time."

"Yes, I guess we all love Ronile," said Roger, "she is like a crystal shining for all, and you want to come in and claim what all the world needs."

"Too much light or sudden fame has caused many to sway and lose their balance; don't do that, Ronile," said Mr. Hirschwald, "your art is still growing and at heart you are a mere child; that is your advantage, hold on to it. You are not close to the world's bosom yet; you are only leaning toward it; therefore, don't disappoint it. Your work is spiritual, and the Church in general sanctions your spiritual plays; to the world you seem to be behind a consecrated door, in a tabernacle built of good deeds."

"Yes," said the impulsive Karl van Reel, "built by her good mother; now she will reap the harvest from years of toil."

"You can order the architect, Mrs. Delien," said the doctor, "and get ready to be my good neighbor. Then I will be happy to watch the sun set and slumber eventually toward the great life we try so hard to explore with human eyes."

A group of artists were admiring the paintings, ornaments and draperies. "This is a very beautifully arranged place," they all agreed; "exquisite taste prevails everywhere."

"I tell you," said Mr. Hirschwald, "if women work out their talents they can exceed us men. They are more intuitive, but they must work single-handed with the female mold of self-reliance. If the male joins, the other

feels the feminine weakness and lacks ambition, then reproaches love for interfering in art. Mrs. Delien never would have worked out these faculties if she had married again; she would have depended too much on the assistance and help of others, and left off for lack of ambition. Need and poverty drove her to it."

"And faith in fate," said the Woman of the story. "Faith in the will of our Father; hope in the welfare of my child through the will of His Son. And charity to all, good or bad, in loving assistance to the spirit prevailing for all, to find their heavenly stake, set by the triune God to make 'The Way of the World' a brighter, more just and more wholesome road to tread onward into everlasting life."

"Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo."

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